
STUDY GUIDE

Special Political and Decolonization

Agenda: Evaluating the Current Status and Effectiveness of UNRWA in Addressing the Needs of Palestinian Refugees

Sr. No	Content	Page No.
1.	Letter from Executive Board	3
2.	Proofs Admissible in Committee	4,5
3.	Introduction to the Committee	6
4.	Introduction to the Agenda	7
5.	What are Peacekeeping Operations?	8,9
6.	Current status of the Israeli Occupation in Palestinian Territory	10
7.	Questions to be answered by the committee	11

Letter from the Executive Board

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to your first step in preparing yourself for WHIS MUN 2024! On behalf of ourselves and the Secretariat, we would like to extend our warmest greetings to you, and hope that this finds you well. Our issues at hand are highly topical and relevant to today's world. Clearly, current affairs and news will be crucial in your research. However, academic writings and data-led reports will also be highly relevant, and can provide useful insights into the topics. The countries you represent all have an interest in solving both issues, though your approach to this will invariably differ. This study guide should be seen as a springboard, giving out the necessary contextual, legal and structural base knowledge. It will be up to you to find out more about your country's positions regarding the topics and craft a coherent stance to take forward in order to resolve the issue. We wish you the best of luck, and hope that you will work hard.

Regards,

Athang Shinde, Chairperson

Proofs Admissible in Committee

Evidence or proof is from the following sources will be accepted as credible in the committee:

1. News Sources :

a. REUTERS – Any Reuters’ article which clearly makes mention of the fact stated or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by another delegate in council can be used to substantiate arguments in the committee. (<http://www.reuters.com/>)

b. State operated News Agencies – These reports can be used in the support of or against the State that owns the News Agency. These reports, if credible or substantial enough, can be used in support of or against any country as such but in that situation, they can be denied by any other country in the council. Some examples are-

- i. RIA Novosti (Russia) <http://en.rian.ru/> ii. IRNA (Iran) <http://www.irna.ir/ENIndex.htm>
- iii. Xinhua News Agency and CCTV (P.R. China) <http://cctvnews.cntv.cn/>

2. Government Reports:

These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country. However, a nuance is that a report that is being denied by a certain country can still be accepted by the Executive Board as credible information.

Some examples are,

a. Government Websites like the State Department of the United States of America <http://www.state.gov/index.htm> or the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation <http://www.eng.mil.ru/en/index.htm>

- i. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of various nations like India (<http://www.mea.gov.in/>) or People’s Republic of China (<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/>).

ii. Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Reports

<http://www.un.org/en/members/> (Click on any country to get the website of the Office of its Permanent Representative.)

iii. Multilateral Organizations like the NATO

(<http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/index.htm>), ASEAN (<http://www.aseansec.org/>), OPEC (http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/), etc.

3. UN Reports:

All UN Reports are considered credible information or evidence for the Executive Board of the UNGA – 1 (DISEC).

a. UN Bodies like the UNSC (<http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/>) or UNGA (<http://www.un.org/en/ga/>).

b. UN Affiliated bodies like the International Atomic Energy Agency (<http://www.iaea.org/>), World Bank (<http://www.worldbank.org/>), International Monetary Fund (<http://www.imf.org/external/index.htm>), International Committee of the Red Cross (<http://www.icrc.org/eng/index.jsp>), etc.

c. Treaty Based Bodies like the Antarctic Treaty System (<http://www.ats.aq/e/ats.htm>), the International Criminal Court (<http://www.iccpi.int/Menus/ICC>)

NOTE: Under no circumstances will sources like Wikipedia (<http://www.wikipedia.org/>), Amnesty International (<http://www.amnesty.org/>), Human Rights Watch (<http://www.hrw.org/>) or newspapers like the Guardian (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/>), Times of India (<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>), etc. be accepted as PROOF/EVIDENCE. But they can be used for better understanding of any issue or even be brought up in debate if the information given in such sources is in line with the beliefs of a Government.

Introduction to the Committee

The United Nations Fourth Committee, otherwise known as the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, was initially formed to deal specifically with decolonization. At first, it dealt with the affairs of territories that were placed under UN trusteeship, that is, under the control of the UN until these territories became independent states. It later took on some of the duties of the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC), allowing DISEC to focus on military issues such as nuclear non-proliferation. As a result, SPECPOL now concerns itself with many international political issues, particularly those resulting from a territorial dispute or a former colonized power. In recent years SPECPOL has focused on questions of autonomy and independence for areas including Palestine, Western Sahara, the Falkland Islands, and several European colonies in the Caribbean and Oceania. It also has discussed related refugee issues (particularly with respect to Israel/Palestine), mine action (for instance in Vietnam), outer space, and the safety implications of nuclear tests. As you can see, SPECPOL's purview is quite broad. For our purposes, it is sufficient to note that SPECPOL is part of the UN General Assembly, and therefore that it is solely a body for discussion; it issues recommendations but has no binding power. In exploring our topics, I encourage you to focus more on the many ways in which the UN, other international bodies, member states, and the private sector have engaged actively with these issues. This will provide a solid foundation for your research, allowing you to propose solutions that demonstrate both innovative thinking and an understanding of current policy. It is perfectly within SPECPOL's purview to recommend these policies to other actors, even if we do not have the resources or the jurisdiction to implement them directly.

Introduction to the Agenda

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was established in 1949 to provide assistance and protection to Palestinian refugees. Over the decades, UNRWA has become a critical lifeline for millions of refugees, offering essential services such as education, healthcare, and social services across its five areas of operation: the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria.

However, the agency faces significant challenges, including chronic underfunding, political pressures, and the complex socio-economic landscape of the regions it serves. These challenges raise important questions about the current status and effectiveness of UNRWA in fulfilling its mandate. Assessing UNRWA's performance involves examining its capacity to address the evolving needs of Palestinian refugees, the impact of its programs, and the sustainability of its operations amid ongoing regional instability and financial constraints. Understanding the agency's achievements and limitations is crucial for shaping future strategies to support Palestinian refugees and enhance their living conditions.

What are Peacekeeping Operations?

UNPKO stands for United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. It refers to missions authorized and deployed by the United Nations to help maintain peace and security in conflict-affected regions around the world. UNPKOs are typically composed of military, police, and civilian personnel from various countries who work together under a UN mandate to support peace processes, protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian assistance, monitor ceasefires, disarm combatants, promote reconciliation, and assist in post-conflict reconstruction efforts. UNPKOs operate based on principles such as consent of parties, impartiality, non-use of force except in self-defense, and respect for national sovereignty. They play a critical role in international peace and security efforts, although they also face challenges such as resource constraints, complex mandates, security risks, and political dynamics in conflict zones.

Principles of UN Peacekeeping Operations:

- **Consent of Parties:** Peacekeeping operations require the consent of the parties involved, including the host country and other relevant stakeholders, to ensure legitimacy and cooperation.
- **Impartiality:** UN peacekeepers must remain impartial and unbiased in their actions, operations, and interactions with conflicting parties, maintaining neutrality and avoiding favoritism.
- **Non-Use of Force Except in Self-Defense and Defense of the Mandate:** Peacekeepers are authorized to use force only in self-defense or defense of the mandate, adhering to the principles of minimum necessary force and proportionality.

- **Defensive Nature:** UN peacekeeping operations are primarily defensive in nature, focused on protecting civilians, humanitarian assistance, monitoring ceasefires, and promoting stability and security.
- **Consent-Based Deployment:** The deployment of peacekeeping forces is based on the consent of the host country and other relevant parties, ensuring respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- **Political Neutrality:** UN peacekeepers maintain political neutrality, refraining from involvement in internal political affairs, partisan activities, or regime changes, to preserve their credibility and effectiveness.
- **National Sovereignty:** Peacekeeping operations respect the national sovereignty and legal frameworks of host countries, operating within the parameters of international law and UN mandates.
- **Partnership and Cooperation:** UN peacekeeping operations collaborate with host governments, regional organizations, humanitarian agencies, and other stakeholders to enhance effectiveness, coordination, and sustainable peace efforts.

Current status of the Israeli occupation in Palestinian Territory

The current status of the Israeli occupation in Palestinian territory is ongoing. Israel has occupied the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip since the Six-Day War in 1967. The occupation is considered illegal by most of the international community, and various countries and organizations have condemned it as a violation of international law. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is currently considering a case brought by the State of Palestine, which argues that Israel's occupation is illegal and must end immediately[1][2][3]

Links :

[1]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli-occupied_territories

[2]

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/2/22/how-does-israels-occupation-of-palestine-work>

[3]

<https://globalaffairs.org/bluemarble/israel-has-occupied-palestinian-territories-1967-un-court-considers-whether-thats-legal>

[4]

<https://www.globalr2p.org/countries/israel-and-the-occupied-palestinian-territory/>

[5]

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/israel-and-occupied-palestinian-territories/report-israel-and-occupied-palestinian-territories/>

Questions to be answered by the committee

- What is the metric by which the question of effectiveness must be answered?
- What is the mandate of the UNRWA, and can other organs of the UN be appealed to, in order to change, extend or improve the mandate?
- If yes, then which organ can be appealed to, under which section of the charter is the said organ permitted to take action
- What are the various options for settling ongoing disputes?
- What actions can the SPECPOL take in this matter?