



# SPECIAL POLITICAL AND DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE

## BACKGROUND GUIDE

Agenda : Housing Crisis in Palestine



**CENMUN**  
One World One Nation

# Message from Executive Board

Dear Delegates,

It is a great pleasure and honor to welcome you to the United Nations General Assembly: Special Political and Decolonization Committee at CENMUN. We assure you a great learning experience backed with quality debate and simulation. We shall be there to catalyze discussions and help you as needed, however, remember the following before you begin reading the guide:

- We wish for committee-wide participation, fruitful and productive debate, and require your discussions to serve as a reflection to the progress made during the committee session.
- The Rules of Procedure are to be followed with utmost diligence. We expect you to adhere to the spirit of the United Nations, and hope you learn and strengthen the art of diplomacy.
- The Background Guide serves to give a general background and facilitate understanding of the topic. You must research deeper into the topic so as to bring productive discussions to the table. The following background guide has been designed in a manner unlike other background guides you might have seen. It is put forth in a layman language which addresses you directly for easy understanding, and further, does not elucidate upon the given subtopics fully. The reason for the same is that provision of such a background guide is equivalent to spoon feeding and stagnates the debate.

However, the given background guide will serve the purpose of explaining what the agenda is, how the delegates should research, and what topics should be focused on – it is a stepping stone to the actual research that needs to be done.

The guide has been divided into following parts in order to ease the process of research for you:

1. About the Committee.
2. How to prepare for the committee?
3. Valid source of proof in the committee
4. Agenda Description
5. Additional Links for research and understanding

With that said and done, we are hoping for a professional, solution-oriented, well researched debate in the committee, having a fruitful output and a solid solution to the issue at hand by the end of the conference.

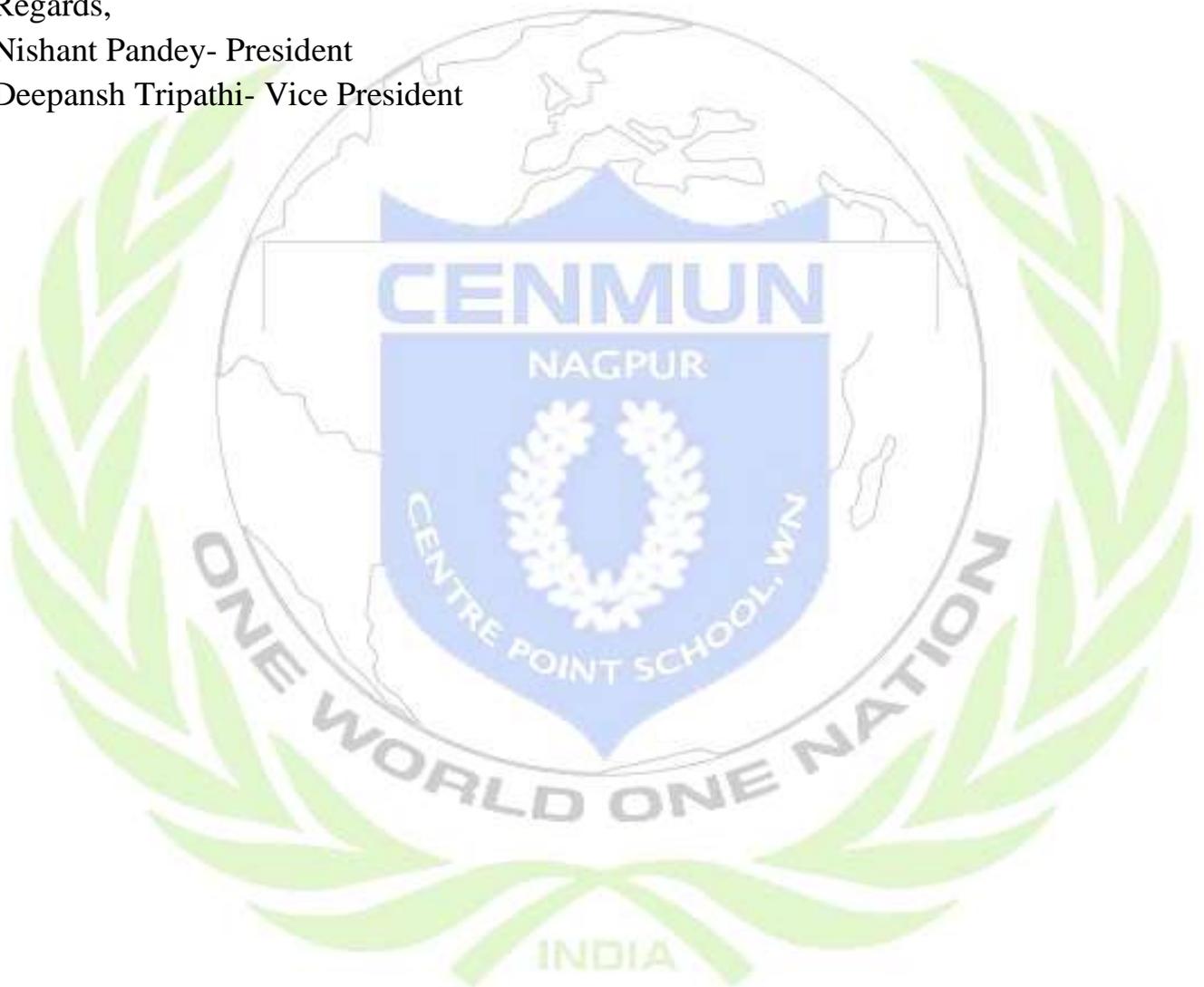
Apart from that, in case of any queries related to the committee or rules of procedure, you may contact me via email or on whatsapp on the information given below.

Wishing you best of luck,

Regards,

Nishant Pandey- President

Deepansh Tripathi- Vice President



## **PART I: Brief Introduction about the Committee.**

The United Nations Fourth Committee, otherwise known as SPECPOL has changed extensively over the years. While initially created to address decolonization questions, due to the growing number of independent nations, its role became superfluous. As such, it merged with the Special Political Committee in 1993 and began branching out into a diverse set of areas, which include peacekeeping, international politics, refugees, public informations (with its subsidiary, the Committee on Information), human rights violations, and even outer space. It also began taking on some of the security roles of DISEC, so that DISEC could focus more specifically on disarmament and nuclear proliferation. The Israel-Palestine conflict in particular has been a cornerstone of SPECPOL's work, particularly in addressing the human rights concerns of refugees in the area. Whenever newer conflicts arise, such as the one in Yemen, it is also the role of SPECPOL to address the immediate and longterm security, humanitarian, and political ramifications. Delegates should remember that, as a UN General Assembly committee, SPECPOL has no binding power and cannot infringe on a country's sovereignty by either forcing it to take certain actions or operating within its borders without its consent. That being said, the suggestions presented by this committee are taken seriously by member states and international organizations and should therefore not be taken lightly. Delegates are encouraged to look at past SPECPOL actions and resolutions to gain a full picture of its jurisdiction in international politics. Redundant resolutions will ultimately be ineffective, so make sure you are bringing some new ideas to the table and challenging yourself by approaching old solutions in a new way.

## **PART II: How to prepare for the committee?**

One of the major misconceptions about the concept of MUN's are that you just research from the internet and speak in the committee. However that's not the only thing you do, you are required to research for the committee AND ANALYSE whatever you've studied. When it comes to the term analysis, a lot of people don't know what it means so for example:

You see someone's mark sheet and see that person has scored 90+ out of 100 in 4 out 5 subjects however in the 5th subject, the person has scored just 53 out of 100.

The part till here is called your research; this is something you've found out by searching somewhere. When it comes to analysis, analysis means interpretation, now for example in the above example a good analysis would be finding out that the person if

gives more time to the 5th subject rather spending so much time on other subjects, his/her marks in the individual subjects might fall a bit but he/she would improve overall because now that person would be scoring well in 5th subject as well. This is what the analysis part is.

In simple language, analysis means to interpret and understand what you've research and being able to present it as an argument in the committee which will help in the flow of the debate.

### **PART III: Valid source of proof in the committee**

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

**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)<sup>1</sup>
- ii. IRNA (Iran)<sup>2</sup>
- iii. BBC (United Kingdom)<sup>3</sup>
- iv. Al Jazeera (Qatar)<sup>4</sup>
- v. Xinhua News Agency (PR China)<sup>5</sup>

**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,

- i.) Government Websites like the State Department of the United States of America<sup>6</sup> or the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation<sup>7</sup>
- ii.) Ministry of Foreign Affairs of various nations like India<sup>8</sup> or People's Republic of China<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://en.rian.ru/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://http://www.irna.ir/en/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://bbc.co.uk/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/china/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.state.gov/index.htm>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.eng.mil.ru/en/index.htm>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.mea.gov.in/>

iii.) Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Reports<sup>10</sup> (Click on any country to get the website of the Office of its Permanent Representative.)

iv.) Multilateral Organizations like the NATO<sup>11</sup>, ASEAN<sup>12</sup>, OPEC<sup>13</sup>, etc.

### **United Nations Reports:**

All UN Reports are considered are credible information or evidence for the Executive Board of the NSG.

i) UN Bodies like the UNSC<sup>14</sup> or UNGA<sup>15</sup>.

ii.) UN Affiliated Bodies like the International Atomic Energy Agency<sup>16</sup>, World Bank<sup>17</sup>, International Monetary Fund<sup>18</sup>, International Committee of the Red Cross<sup>19</sup>, etc.

iii.) Treaty Based Bodies like the Antarctic Treaty System<sup>20</sup>, the International Criminal Court<sup>21</sup>

NOTE — Sources like Wikipedia<sup>22</sup>, Human Rights Watch<sup>23</sup> or newspapers like the Guardian<sup>24</sup>, Times of India<sup>25</sup> etc. are typically not accepted as PROOF/EVIDENCE.

## **Part IV: Agenda Description**

### **Housing Crisis in Palestine**

#### **1. Introduction:-**

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/members/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/index.htm>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.aseansec.org/>

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.opec.org/opec\\_web/en/](http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/)

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/ga/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.iaea.org/>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.imf.org/external/index.htm>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.icrc.org/eng/index.jsp>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.ats.aq/e/ats.htm>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.icc-cpi.int/Menus/ICC>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.wikipedia.org/>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.hrw.org/>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/>

<sup>25</sup> [http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com /](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/)

Palestinians face housing crisis as Jerusalem settlements thrive. Once the cultural and economic heart of Palestine, East Jerusalem is suffering from a severe housing crisis after decades of neglect and discrimination in planning and building. Declared by Israel as its undivided capital, Jerusalem is in reality a tale of two very different cities. Since 1967, Israel's government has stifled the economic development of the Palestinian community in East Jerusalem, while simultaneously establishing and expanding illegal Jewish settlements.

Israel's government since 1967 has had a policy of annexing as much land as possible without incorporating the people in terms of their basic rights. Since 1967, Israel has built approximately 55,000 housing units in newly established illegal Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem. In the same time period no new Palestinian neighbourhoods have been established.

Rights groups say that Palestinians have been restricted to building in only 17 percent of East Jerusalem, meaning their only option is to expand existing properties. This process, however, requires obtaining a building permit from the Jerusalem municipality, a lengthy, costly, and ultimately uncertain procedure. There is an annual shortage of 1,500 housing units in Palestinian neighbourhoods to accommodate natural growth.

The shortage of housing units to alleviate overcrowding in East Jerusalem is estimated in the tens of thousands. Despite this, Israel's municipality only approves between 100-150 permits a year, forcing Palestinians to build illegally. There is also a huge financial burden to obtain building permits, which can cost as much as 110,000 shekels (\$29,900) in taxes and legal fees, the equivalent cost of building a new house. Given the financial and bureaucratic obstacles, many Palestinians choose to build illegally, incurring the threat of having their house demolished by Israeli authorities.

Since 2004, a total of 517 Palestinian homes have been demolished in East Jerusalem, leaving over 2,000 East Jerusalemites homeless. Roughly 50 percent of all Palestinian homes in Jerusalem are under threat of being demolished.

### **Expansion of settlements**

Palestinians in Jerusalem are faced with few choices when it comes to housing. Residents can live in overcrowded conditions, leave the city and lose their residency rights, or build illegally and hope their home is not demolished.

The looming threat of demolition is a useful tool for Israeli authorities to control the Palestinian population, a constant threat.

The Israeli government considers Jerusalem its “eternal and undivided” capital, according to a basic law passed in 1980 by the Israeli Knesset, and does not differentiate between east and west in terms of sovereignty. The international community has not recognised Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and sees all settlement building in the east as illegal.

Settlement blocs in East Jerusalem, such as Pisgat Zeev, Neve Yaakov, Gilo, Har Homa, and Maale Adumim are designed for the same purpose: To separate East Jerusalem from the West Bank and ensure it never becomes part of a Palestinian state in any future peace agreement.

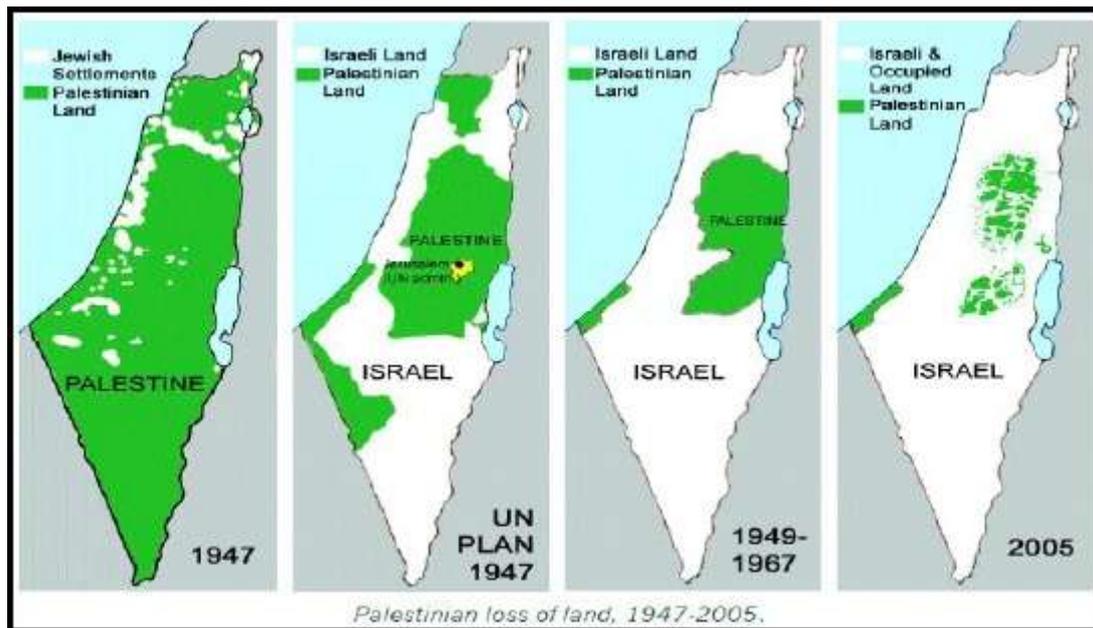
## **Background**

**(1) Zionism-** In the 1800s a group called Zionists in Europe (representing an extremist minority of Jewish population) decided to colonize this land to create a Jewish homeland. As the number of Zionist immigrants increased in Palestine, a conflict broke out.

**(2) UN Partition Plan-** In the 1947 the United Nations decided to intervene with this accelerating conflict. But instead of the principle of “self determination of peoples”, UN chose the strategy of outside power dividing up other people’s land. With Zionist pressure, UN gave 55% of Palestine to a Jewish state (who initially owned under 7% of land and only represented 30% of the population).

**(3) 1947-1949 War-** The Civil War in Palestine had gone on for five and a half months, between the Jews of Palestine and the Arabs of Palestine. At the end, it was a “decisive victory” of the Jewish side which was then followed by the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. The newly declared State of Israel fought with its Arab neighbours from Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. By the end of the war, approximately 725 000 Palestinian Arabs fled or were expelled from their homes (known as 1948 Palestinian exodus). The new Israeli government refused to recognize existence of the Palestinian population.





(4) **1967 War & USS Liberty-** During the Six-Day War in 1967, Israel launched a surprise attack on Egypt, occupying the territories (the West Bank and Gaza Strip) populated by Palestinians from Jordan and Egypt. During this war Israel also attacked a US Navy Ship (USS Liberty). This had left Egypt, Soviet Union, Jordan and PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) as an ally especially during the War of Attrition (July 1967– August 1970).

(5) **1970 – 1993/ 1993 - 2005-** This is the period between the Six-Day War and the Oslo Accords. The Oslo Accords was the first face-to-face agreement between the Israel and the PLO. According to this, the West Bank and Gaza were supposed to become a Palestinian state. But as the Israel continued to confiscate land, the Palestinian population began to rebel at the end of September 2000 (the uprising which was called “Intifada”). In 2005, Israel forces withdrew from the Gaza Strip and four settlements in the northern West Bank (Israel’s unilateral disengagement plan).

## 2. Questions to Consider

These are some questions to consider when looking for possible solutions.

(1) Jerusalem—an important setting for religious & historical narratives

- Should city be left “unified” within Israel’s political control?
- Should Palestinians be allowed to claim at least the parts of the city which were not part of Israel prior to June 1967?

(2) Palestinian refugees of the 1948 war

- Definition of Palestinian refugee–

should it remain as “a person whose normal place of residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948 and who lost both their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict”?

- Should the descendants of these original Palestinian Refugees be eligible for registration and UNRWA services? Do they have the “right to return” although they were born outside of Israel?

### (3) Israeli settlements in the West Bank

- Are the Israeli settlements in the West Bank illegal?
- Should they be disengaged, following the pattern from 2005 Disengagement Plan in the Gaza Strip?

**3. Current Situations-** The most pressing issue that remains are Israeli settlements in Palestinian territory. What started as a few Israelis toeing over the border line and building homes, escalated to a point where nearly 10% of the Israeli population lives either in West Jerusalem or the West Bank.<sup>40</sup> When the settlements first began they were small encampments in Palestinian territory, but today they are often the size of cities and are filled with middle class Israeli homes. To make matters worse, the Israeli government fails to discourage, and at some points even encourages, the migration of their citizens to the West Bank. These settlements undermine the possibility of any peace accord or a two state solution, given that Israeli citizens in those areas offer a pretext through which the Israeli military can exert their presence in Palestinian territory. While the international community, including their long term ally – the United States, has actively condemned Israel for these settlements, they continue to expand and, in doing so, threaten the possibility of Palestinian autonomy.

### 4. Important Terms:-

- Balfour Declaration: this declaration was a public support for the Zionist movement from the British government and a promise that they would establish a Jewish state in Palestine at the end of World War I.
- Partition Plan: at the end of World War II, this plan was developed by the United Nations through Resolution 181. It created two states (one Arab and one Israeli) in Palestine.
- 1948 Arab-Israeli war: This war was the first of many Arab-Israeli wars and was initiated by Arab states in the region as a response to the Partition Plan. It resulted in more land for Israel and granted Jordan and Egypt control of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, respectively.

- Gamal Abder Nassar: President of Egypt that nationalized the Suez Canal. This led to the reigniting of tensions between Egypt and Israel in the late 1950s.
- Six Day War: Short war in June of 1967 which resulted in massive territorial gains for the Israeli government and a lot of resentment from the Arab nations.
- Yom Kippur War: In response to the gains attained by Israel in the Six Day War, Egypt and Syria launched an attack on Israel on one of their religious holidays, catching them off guard.
- Resolutions 242 and 339: A result of the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War respectively, these resolutions required that Israel return land illegally obtained during their conflict with the Arab countries and respect the sovereignty of surrounding states. This effectively cut off Israeli expansion.
- Intifada: Term that means “shaking off” in Arabic and refers, in this context, to uprisings of the Palestinian people against Israel with the goal of gaining their autonomy.<sup>26</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

## Part V: Additional Links (for reference only)

1. <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/israel/palestine>
2. <https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/lack-unrwa-funding-exacerbates-housing-crisis-palestine-refugees>
3. <http://english.pnn.ps/2018/02/19/gaza-125000-homes-required-to-overcome-housing-crisis/>
4. <https://electronicintifada.net/content/housing-situation-occupied-palestinian-territories-and-establishment-human-settlements-fund>

<sup>26</sup> [https://irc.princeton.edu/pmunc/docs/PMUNC2017\\_SPECPOL.pdf](https://irc.princeton.edu/pmunc/docs/PMUNC2017_SPECPOL.pdf)