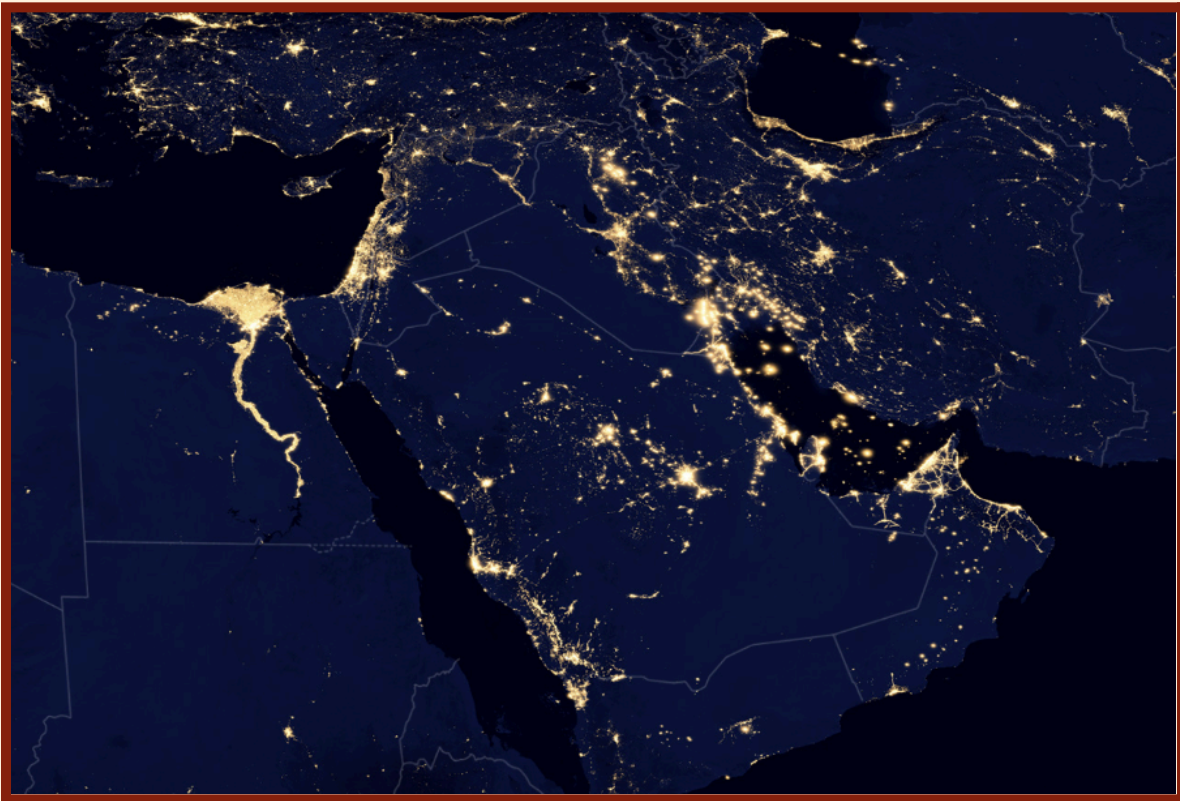


UNSC

Fault Lines:

*The Future of Middle East
Security*



**39th Annual Model United Nations
Conference at St. John's High School**

By Javan Premraj '28 and Ayan Mishra '28

Table of Contents

<i>Letters From the Chairs:</i> -----	2
<i>History of the problem</i> -----	4
<i>Statement of the Problem</i> -----	7
<i>Possible Solutions</i> -----	11
<i>Bloc Positions</i> -----	15
<i>Bibliography</i> -----	20

Letters From the Chairs:

Hi Delegates,

I'm Javan, and I'll be your chair for this year's UNSC committee. I'm a rising junior here, and it's surreal to say that it's my third year participating in our school's Model UN program. After school, you could find me working on some hands-on project in the robotics lab or at the tennis courts during the spring season. I'm excited to chair this year's committee with Ayan and hope you enjoy this year's topic set in the present-day Middle East. We ask that you approach the sensitive topic with great care and respect, especially during committee sessions. We've tried to give you enough background to hit the ground running, but the real work happens in committee, through your research and the positions you build from here. Come prepared, think critically, and don't be afraid to push for creative solutions.

To set the stage for debate on the day of the conference, we suggest that all delegates write a position paper outlining their country's position, past efforts to solve the problem, and any future solutions they would like to see discussed during the conference (Completely optional). Please send these over to my email (premraj28@stjohnshigh.org) by the day of the conference. If you have any questions at all, please feel free to reach out to either myself or Ayan, and don't be afraid to reach out to us for help. We are both looking forward to meeting you all at the conference!

Javan Premraj '28

Hi Delegates,

I'm Ayan, and I'll be your co-chair for this year's UNSC committee alongside Javan. I'm excited to be chairing this committee and to see where you all take the topic. The Middle East is an especially interesting region to discuss because there are very few simple problems or simple solutions, and the positions of the countries you represent are often shaped by decades of alliances, conflicts, and competing interests.

As you prepare, I encourage you to use this briefing paper as a starting point rather than your only source of information. Research your country's position, but also try to understand why it holds that position and what it might realistically be willing to compromise on. Some of the best parts of Model UN come from having to work with countries whose interests are very different from your own, so come prepared to defend your position while still being open to creative solutions.

Most importantly, don't worry about having everything figured out before you walk into committee. Whether this is your first conference or one of many, we want this to be a place where you can speak, debate, and try new ideas. If you have any questions while preparing, feel free to reach out to either of us (my email is mishra28@stjohnshigh.org). I'm looking forward to meeting you all and hope you have a great time at the conference!

Ayan Mishra '28

History of the Problem:

The modern Middle East was largely made by outsiders. The Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916, an Anglo-French treaty that carved up the Ottoman Arab provinces between themselves, led to the creation of Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Jordan. These borders were not drawn with any regard for existing social ties or ethnic and religious identities. The Balfour Declaration of the same year, encouraging Jewish settlement in Palestine, triggered a territorial dispute that continues to this day. Together, these two documents, among the most consequential in modern Middle Eastern history, were produced within a year in London.

The next major milestone took place in 1948, when Israel was born, and the first Arab-Israeli war broke out. It ended in catastrophe for the Palestinians, who lost roughly 700,000 people in death and displacement in what is since referred to as the Nakba, or the catastrophe. The next war, which began in 1967, saw Israel occupying the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Sinai Peninsula, and Golan Heights. These territorial gains made Israel the nuclear power in the Middle East. The following three wars, occurring in 1973, 1982, and 1991, did not produce significant territorial changes.

However, the 2003 American-led invasion of Iraq brought in a new chapter of territorial turmoil. The dissolution of the Iraqi army and the Ba'ath Party led to the rise of ISIS, which promptly began conquering the territory it was to soon lose to the Syrian Democratic Army, Iraqi Security Forces, Kurdish militias, Iran, and the United States. The organization, which ruled over an area larger than England at the height of its power in 2014, was defeated in 2019. The conditions that allowed ISIS to rise are still present in the region today.

The same can be said for the entire Arab world, which is currently in a state of chaos. The Arab Spring protests of 2011 led to multiple wars, the only one of which, so far, ended in Tunisia. The world was shocked by the bloodshed in Syria, which continues to this day, but the situation in Libya is scarcely better. Only the brutal Russian intervention prevented further chaos in Syria. At the cost of half a million lives and untold suffering, the civil war ended in the triumph of President Assad, who remains in power with the help of Iranian and Russian mercenaries.

Yet, even as the long and devastating Syrian conflict comes to an end, another one begins in Yemen. The Saudi-led coalition intervened on behalf of the government in Saudi Arabia to combat Iran's growing influence in the region. With the help of private military companies from the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, they engaged Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon in a proxy war. This struggle, which is now entering its sixth year, has so far failed to produce any clear victors.

The entire regional order is built on a confrontation between Saudi Arabia and Iran, with both countries vying for influence in their backyard. Their struggle is played out in Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, where proxies on both sides kill hundreds of thousands of innocents. The Abraham Accords of 2020, which established official diplomatic relations between Israel and several Arab states, represent a shift toward a new regional order. Israel, the UAE, Bahrain, and Sudan have formed an alliance to counter the common enemy, Iran. This development, which has so far gone unnoticed by the Security Council, is set to profoundly reshape the Middle East's strategic landscape.

Statement of the Problem:

Resolution 2803, the most significant multilateral agreement on Gaza since the beginning of the war, has had its second stage, the Hamas disarmament, frozen. President Trump has simultaneously announced the formation of the Board of Peace, a National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, consisting of Palestinian technocrats, and an International Stabilization Force, in whose ranks Indonesia, Morocco, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, and Albania have sent troops (UN News, 2026). Hamas has agreed to leave day-to-day governance to the technocratic committee but refused to give up its arms in the face of “a crude demand to disarm,” citing the absence of guarantees for the Palestinian state’s existence; significantly, Hamas continues to be heavily armed as of June 2026. Israeli forces continue to occupy Gaza, with attacks resuming during the ceasefire: according to the Ministry of Health and the Palestinian Center for Human Rights, as of the Council’s June 2026 session, about 1,000 Palestinians have died in Israeli attacks since the ceasefire began, while Israeli authorities, in turn, accuse Hamas of obstructing the reconstruction and preparing to resume firing (UN Meetings Coverage, 2026; Al Jazeera, 2026). Rebuilding has barely begun, with funding explicitly tied to the disarmament as stipulated by Resolution 2803, the World Health Organization reporting that Gaza does not have a single hospital open to patients, and 1.8 million people living in tents: as of now, the entire Gaza Strip’s population is displaced. At the same time, Russia and China voted against Resolution 2803, voting “against” rather than “withheld,” citing uncertainty about the composition and the authority of the Board of Peace and formally distancing themselves from its existence. Elsewhere, outside the framework of Resolution 2803, Jewish settlers have continued to harass and occupy the West Bank: most problematically, there is a project to develop housing

construction on the eastern outskirts of Jerusalem, designed to put the Palestinian state's capital within Israel's borders, which has been supported by both the Trump administration and Prime Minister Netanyahu (House of Commons Library, 2026a).

Iran's nuclear program has ceased to be a distant prospect threatening the Council's inaction; rather, it has seen two wars fought on its behalf within the last year. Twelve-Day War of June 2025 and the American-Israeli campaign targeting Iran's nuclear facilities in Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan in February-May 2026, which killed Khamenei himself, undermined the mullahs' program, but the duration of the damage is difficult to estimate, ranging from a few months to several years, with Iran's stockpiles of 60 percent enriched uranium remaining unconfirmed (Institute for Science and International Security, 2026). At the same time, the technical expertise and political will to develop such a program have not disappeared, and the successor to Khamenei has yet to be elected. The ceasefire of April 2026 has so far held more firmly than the one in 2025, and reports of détente in May 2026 suggest that both sides are close to an overall agreement; however, neither the inspection regime nor a sanctions treaty comparable to the 2015 JCPOA has yet been drafted. Saudi Arabia's undertaking to reciprocate every Iranian weapon with equal or greater arms, and Turkey's analogous unofficial guarantee, remain in force despite the diminution of Iran's military capabilities.

It was not international sanctions that diminished the threat posed by Syria, but rather the weakening of the state as a whole. The system of economic sanctions that the West has been waging against Syria for half a century has been largely dismantled in the eighteen months of the Assad regime: the Caesar Act was repealed by the US Congress in December 2025; resolution 2799 of the Security Council in November 2025 lifted President al-Sharaa from the terror list

designating him; and al-Sharaa has since met President Trump twice – first in Riyadh, then in the White House in November 2025, becoming the first Syrian president to set foot in the US (Atlantic Council, 2026; House of Commons Library, 2026b). However, HTS remains subject to UN sanctions even as its members hold office in the Syrian transitional administration, an inconsistency several Security Council members have pointed out. The removal of sanctions has not spurred domestic reconstruction to the degree the World Bank hopes it might, given the \$216 billion in reconstruction loans that the Bank has so far allocated to post-Assad Syria: communities continue to erupt in sectarian violence across Syria, notably in Alawite-majority coastal cities in March 2025 and Druze-majority southern towns in July 2025, with each incident fueling distrust in the new government’s ability to protect minorities, and several times, the integration of these areas with the Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces had to be suspended (Security Council Report, 2025b). Meanwhile, in the Golan Heights, Israel has violated the disengagement agreement of 1974 by the Israel Defense Forces, pushing its troops deeper into the region than permitted by the disengagement terms, and demanding a demilitarized corridor from the edge of Damascus to the border, which al-Sharaa has firmly opposed.

The Abraham Accords have continued to develop throughout the year, with Kazakhstan joining in November 2025 and Israel unilaterally recognizing Somaliland the following month (Wikipedia contributors, 2026b); however, the addition of Saudi Arabia, which many analysts believe to be essential to the agreement’s credibility, has so far failed to materialize. In May 2026, in the context of the potential détente with Iran, President Trump convened a meeting with the Saudi, UAE, Qatari, Pakistani, Turkish, Egyptian, and Jordanian authorities to join the Abraham Accords at once; however, Saudi diplomats reiterated their position that normalization

of relations with Israel was conditional on the establishment of a Palestinian state, which Netanyahu's government has thus far refused to endorse (Time, 2026). The public diplomatic impasse between Saudi Arabia and Israel stands in stark contrast to the private security cooperation between Gulf states, the US, and Israel that took place during the 2026 Israeli missile defense drills, in which Saudi Arabia and Qatar, countries not formally allied with Israel, participated (Manara Magazine, 2026).

Possible Solutions:

The tools available to the Council have evolved, as have the challenges before it. Several of the policy options first outlined in earlier iterations of this project have taken shape in one form or another: an international transitional authority for Gaza, a structured diplomatic track with Iran. The question now is not so much one of creation, but of legitimization, specification, and adjustment.

Make the Board of Peace and the International Stabilization Force more accountable to the Council. While Resolution 2803, which endorsed the Comprehensive Plan, included some measures to specify the makeup, responsibilities, and legal authority of the Board of Peace, its vague language was almost certainly a factor in Russia's and China's decision to veto the measure. A subsequent resolution could more explicitly detail the ISF's mandate within the framework of Chapter VII, set a timeline and benchmarks for Israel's withdrawal beyond the yellow line, and require the Board of Peace to report to the Council rather than operate as a separate, effectively U.S.-chaired entity.

Decouple Hamas's disarmament from the conditions for statehood, while tying both to a time-bound political process. By linking the terms of Hamas's political re-entry to a staged, Council-mandated weapons buyback and amnesty program - which the plan already incorporates - the new resolution could transform the status quo of mutual entanglement into a mechanism for simultaneous, irreversible de-escalation. A concurrent commitment from the Palestinian Authority, Hamas, and the Arab guarantor states to a specific timetable for normalization talks - including security guarantees for Israel - would give each side an immediate incentive to comply.

Formally embed a framework for verifying Iran's compliance with the deal and lifting sanctions. With the ceasefire in place since April 2026 and full diplomatic negotiations set to begin, the resolution could provide a mechanism for endorsing the parallel U.S.-Iran negotiations on Iran's nuclear program while requiring IAEA inspection of Iran's remaining arsenal and any nuclear material transferred out of the country. By giving this framework the force of a Council resolution, the deal enjoys greater durability than the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement, which was formally a multilateral pact but was undermined by the Trump administration's unilateral withdrawal.

Tie Syria's reconstruction to assurances about the safety of its ethnic minorities and consider measures to facilitate Israel's withdrawal to the 1974 lines of military disengagement. In effect, the easing of sanctions has removed the obstacle to Syria's reconstruction while leaving its political transition - and the security of the country's Alawite, Druze, and Kurdish minorities - to the whim of Assad and his security apparatus. The resolution could create a coordination office for Syria's reconstruction with a mandate to approve spending requests based on objective

criteria on the ground. Simultaneously, the Council could pressure Israel to withdraw its forces to the positions specified in the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement.

Give a public endorsement to the de facto air and naval defense arrangements among regional powers. The U.S.-led CENTCOM alliance's coordinated response to the Iranian missile assault in late 2026 reportedly included the aid of Gulf states not formally allied to either power, and similar unofficial multinational coalitions are likely to emerge in response to Houthi attacks on shipping. A publicly stated Council policy on multinational maritime security cooperation and air-defense systems would serve to legitimize such ad hoc arrangements while reducing the risk that they would be dissolved if any one state were to change its position.

Organize a regional conference on security and cooperation in the Middle East. The prospect of an a la Helsinki security conference, in which all regional powers - including Iran and Israel - as well as the P5 nations would negotiate directly on troop movements, security assurances, and confidence-building measures, carries particular appeal given the past year's rapid military escalations and their limited political consequences.

Bloc Positions:

Block 1:

United States - the chief architect of the Board of Peace, viewing resolution 2803 as a validation of its Gaza framework; interprets both Iran strikes as defensive and non-negotiable, and pushing hardest for expansion of the Abraham Accords.

United Kingdom - supported 2803 but wants enhanced reporting requirements for the mandate of the Board of Peace; is more cautious than Washington on unconditional deterrence-first Iran policy.

France - supports the ceasefire framework but wants a clearer statehood horizon for the Palestinian Authority; is skeptical of Russian participation in any Board of Peace successor body.

Germany - under domestic political pressure (both from pro-Israel and humanitarian constituencies) is a cautious supporter, seeking EU-coordinated conditions on reconstruction funding.

Japan - focused on funding and humanitarian contributions, not security architecture; is wary of being drawn into Abraham Accords-adjacent commitments given its own regional security priorities.

South Korea - has limited direct stake; is supportive of US positions but primarily interested in nonproliferation precedent-setting from the Iran deal.

Australia - rhetorically aligned with the US/UK, emphasizing humanitarian aid delivery mechanisms and ISF troop-contribution logistics.

Canada - non-veto but vocal, pushing for stronger human rights monitoring provisions within the Board of Peace mandate.

Italy - concerned with Mediterranean security; wants the Board of Peace linked to broader Libya/North Africa stabilization; cautiously pro-Accords expansion.

Netherlands - emphasizes ICC/international law; pushes for accountability mechanisms alongside reconstruction funding.

Poland - aligns with US on deterrence policy; is less engaged on Gaza specifics, more focused on precedent for Council response to sovereignty violations (relevant to its own security context).

Ukraine - uses the Iran-strikes precedent debate to argue for consistent Council standards on sovereignty violations; seeking Western bloc solidarity in exchange for support on 2803.

Bloc 2:

Russia - voted against (not vetoed) 2803; frames tactical restraint, not endorsement; prefers a Council-directed Iran verification regime to a bilateral arrangement between the US and Iran; protects its Syrian military assets.

China - primarily economic interests (energy and Belt and Road); voted against 2803 on principle but avoids getting too entangled; quietly opposes any architecture that would expand the scope of US basing or influence.

Belarus - primarily rhetorical support for Russia's positions on sovereignty and non-intervention; few independent interests but serves as a useful vote-bloc amplifier.

North Korea - not a member of the Council but a relevant actor as an observer to the deal and interested party in the nonproliferation framework it establishes; condemns the strikes as violations of sovereignty; opposes any verification regime that might serve as a precedent against itself.

Bloc 3:

Saudi Arabia - Normalizes conditions in return for credible Palestinian statehood commitments; facilitates unofficial security cooperation with both Israel and the US; officially opposed to UAE's "pro-Israel" tendency

UAE - Most pro-Israel of the Board members, vocal advocate for expanding the Peace and Accords framework to include reconstruction assistance; resented by Saudi media

Jordan - Frontline state in terms of both refugee flows and West Bank security; most insistent on the need for statehood language; concerned about Peace and Accords becoming permanent occupation management mechanism

Egypt - Gaza border and reconstruction logistics; insists on having Egyptian representation in any technocratic committees; concerned about-ISF deployment near its territory

Qatar - Main conduit for Hamas; insists on assurances that Hamas will not be isolated and therefore derail the ceasefire; funds humanitarian channels

Pakistan - Only elected member; careful balancing act between OIC solidarity and Gulf funding; cautious engagement with Iran due to Pakistan's own security concerns

Kuwait - Focus on humanitarian aid; consistent backing of Palestinian statehood at the UN; otherwise limited security space

Bahrain - Already signed on to the Accords; advocates for expedited timeline, putting it at odds with Saudi demands for reciprocity

Morocco - Similar to Bahrain in terms of the Accords membership; more concerned with potential implications for sovereignty in regard to Western Sahara

Algeria - An elected member like Bahrain but more skeptical of the Peace and Accords framework than most Gulf states; closest to Bloc 2 in its emphasis on sovereignty but supportive of Palestinian statehood in general

Indonesia - Largest Muslim country; vocal support for Palestinian statehood; offers peacekeeping-related contributions to ISF

Malaysia - Strong rhetoric in support of Palestine; more skeptical of ISF than most other members of Bloc 1; emphasizes South-South solidarity

South Africa - Emphasizes ICJ and legal remedies; most vocal in this bloc about need for accountability measures

Nigeria - African Group's lone representative; emphasizes need for precedent-setting role in regard to Council; more moderate in general

Bloc 4:

Brazil - Swing vote in the UN; seeks to bolster the credibility of the Global South's position in the international arena; promotes ceasefire-consolidation language while rejecting attempts to interpret the resolution as a justification for unilateral attacks.

Israel - Special invitee/directly concerned party; positions both Iran-related military actions as defensive necessities while resisting any reference to a specific timeline for the establishment of state institutions; concurrently promotes the Board of Peace option only after Israel's right to disarmament is secured.

Palestine - Seeks to advance the UN's consideration of Palestine's membership request and a definite timeline for statehood while wary of the Board's of Peace's potential role as an alternative to diplomatic sovereignty.

Syria - Transitional administration which succeeded Assad; seeks permanent sanctions lifting while resisting any foreign oversight over Syria's domestic military affairs.

Lebanon - Politically fragile state which is indirectly confronted with the loss of its militias' influence; concurrently seeks international support for its national army's authority and avoids becoming entangled in renewed regional conflicts.

Iraq - Faces indirect pressures to counterbalance Iran's diminished influence while balancing its alliances with both the US and Iran-supportive political groups at home.

Yemen - Confronts the risk of Houthi's military buildup following the Iranian strike; seeks to attract the Council's attention to the Red Sea security issues beyond Gaza and Iran.

Bibliography:

- Al Jazeera Staff. “Death Toll in Gaza Since ‘Ceasefire’ with Israel Goes Past 1,000.” Al Jazeera. June 17, 2026.
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/6/17/death-toll-in-gaza-since-ceasefire-with-israel-goes-past-1000>.
- Atlantic Council. “Syria Joining the Anti-ISIS Coalition Is a Westward Pivot—with Opportunities and Risks.” Atlantic Council. November 21, 2025.
<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/syria-joining-the-anti-isis-coalition-is-a-westward-pivot-with-opportunities-and-risks/>.
- House of Commons Library. “Gaza 2026: Board of Peace and National Transitional Committee.” House of Commons Library. February 17, 2026.
<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10492/>.
- House of Commons Library. “Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories in 2025: UK and International Response.” House of Commons Library. Accessed August 24, 2026.
<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10235/>.
- Institute for Science and International Security. “Comprehensive Imagery Report on Nuclear Enrichment Related Sites, Post-April Ceasefire.” Institute for Science and International Security. June 10, 2026.
<https://isis-online.org/isis-reports/comprehensive-imagery-report-on-nuclear-enrichment-related-sites-post-april-ceasefire>.

- Manara Magazine. “Missile Defense in the Middle East: A Smart Investment That Must Evolve.” Manara Magazine. July 2025.
<https://manaramagazine.org/2025/07/missile-defense-in-the-middle-east-a-smart-investment-that-must-evolve/>.
- Security Council Report. “Syria, August 2025 Monthly Forecast.” Security Council Report. July 30, 2025.
<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2025-08/syria-82.php>.
- TIME. “What to Know About the Abraham Accords as Trump Seeks Iran Deal.” TIME. May 26, 2026.
<https://time.com/article/2026/05/26/abraham-accords-trump-peace-deal-us-israel-iran-war/>.
- United Nations. “Board of Peace High Representative for Gaza Briefs the Security Council.” United Nations Question of Palestine. May 21, 2026.
<https://www.un.org/unispal/document/high-representative-for-gaza-nickolay-mladenovs-briefing-to-the-security-council/>.
- United Nations. “Gaza: Commitment to US-Backed Plan Crucial to Recovery, Security Council Hears.” United Nations in Palestine. March 25, 2026.
<https://palestine.un.org/en/312477-gaza-commitment-us-backed-plan-crucial-recovery-security-council-hears>.
- United Nations. “Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2803 (2025): Report of the Board of Peace through the Office of the High Representative for Gaza (S/2026/418).” United Nations Question of Palestine. May 15, 2026.

<https://www.un.org/unispal/document/implementation-of-united-nations-security-council-resolution-2803-2025-report-of-the-board-of-peace-through-the-office-of-the-high-representative-for-gaza-s-2026-418/>.

- United Nations. “Security Council Authorizes Stabilization Force in Gaza, Adopting Resolution 2803 (2025).” United Nations Question of Palestine. November 17, 2025. <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/security-council-meeting-coverage-17nov25/>.
- United Nations Security Council. “Resolution 2803 (2025).” United Nations Digital Library. November 17, 2025. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4093207?ln=en>.
- Wikipedia contributors. “Abraham Accords.” Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Accessed August 24, 2026. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Accords.
- Wikipedia contributors. “International Recognition of Somaliland.” Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Accessed August 24, 2026. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_recognition_of_Somaliland.