

Special Regional Committee Study Guide

Abraham Accords 2.0



We believe that the best way to address challenges is through cooperation and dialogue and that developing friendly relations among States advances the interests of lasting peace in the Middle East and around the world.

We seek tolerance and respect for every person in order to make this world a place where all can enjoy a life of dignity and hope, no matter their race, faith or ethnicity.

We seek to end radicalization and conflict to provide all children a better future.

We pursue a vision of peace, security, and prosperity in the Middle East and around the world.

[Abraham Accords Declaration](#)

Dear Delegates, this study guide is designed to introduce you to the topic that you will be discussing in your committee: **Special Regional Committee (SRC)**.

SRC

The Special Regional Committee (SRC) is composed of MENA countries along with other countries relevant to the debate, and focused on Middle East related pressing issues. The two topics to be covered in the SRC are: 1. Renewing and expanding the Abraham Accords initiative under the new US administration, and 2. jumpstarting Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations in hopes of reaching a historical, comprehensive, negotiated end to the long-lasting conflict.

Note: Rather than writing resolutions, this committee will try to write and sign Peace Accords.

Abraham Accords

From 2020-2021, Israel signed a series of normalization agreements with Bahrain, Morocco, Sudan, and the United Arab Emirates, known as the “Abraham Accords.” The agreements, brokered by and with the support of the US government, and particularly the Trump White House, were an unprecedented achievement in advancing peace within the Middle East region. While there were high hopes for diplomatic progress with additional countries joining, the process stalled.

Now, with President Trump entering office for his second term, there is already buzz about a renewed push for advancing regional peace through economic and peace agreements, including which countries could be next, what it might take for them to sign, and what the implications for regional development could be. Your committee will simulate this developing reality.



<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/microsite/2/node/116049>

Key Players

State Actors:

- **United States:** The incoming Trump administration is invested in advancing additional regional peace accords, as part of President Trump's vision of an economic-first, negotiations-based peace, and as his presidential legacy.
- **Israel:** Israel has seen the benefits of having more allies and positive diplomatic relations in the region, as well as the risks of instability, but will also be concerned about weapons deals that could prove a security risk down the line.
- **Saudi Arabia:** Seen as the key to opening the door to more peace agreements, it is believed that Saudi Arabia approved of the Bahrain and UAE accords behind closed doors, but that it wants concrete commitments on the Israeli-Palestinian front before it will reach an agreement itself.
- **Indonesia:** Often rumored to be the next country to sign accords, Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim majority state in the world, and home to a very diverse non-Arab population. It also has significant economic potential, with a national GDP larger than Saudi Arabia or Turkey.
- **Oman:** A [GCC](#) member alongside Bahrain, the UAE and Saudi Arabia, Oman has an interesting history with Israel, including agreeing to trade offices in the 1990s, high level visits between the countries, and a recent agreement to allow Israeli civilian planes to fly over Omani airspace. But Oman has refused to normalize relations until the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is resolved.
- **Syria:** Israeli-Syrian negotiations were [ongoing in 2010-11](#), but later collapsed. The fall of the Assad regime, coupled with the weakening of Iran's influence on the country, and fears over Islamic State influence on the country, could create a perfect storm of factors to finally motivate both sides to reach a negotiated settlement to a decades-long conflict.
- **Tunisia:** Tunisia has refused to join neighboring Morocco in signing an accord with Israel, although the country has allowed Israeli tourists to enter the country for the annual Lag Ba'omer pilgrimage. President Kais Saeid has been criticized for taking the country back to authoritarianism, but his strong hold on power could actually make facilitating a peace accords easier.
- **Russia/China/EU:** The US took the lead on the Abraham Accords, even catching its partners in the EU off-guard, but will Russia, China or the EU try to play a larger role this time, to ensure getting some of the credit and preserving their own regional influence?



<https://www.arabnews.com/node/1910091/middle-east>

Key issues

- **Trade:** 2023 trade between Israel and the Abraham Accords countries reached \$4 billion, nearly 1% of Israel's GDP, outpacing even [optimistic estimates](#), with room for growth including in areas of tourism, startup investment and innovation, green energy, and more.
- **Influence of Iran:** Iran's geopolitical power is at a low-point with the loss of Assad, weakening of Hezbollah, and President Trump's return to office. Iran has also had an important reconciliation with Saudi Arabia in recent years, while seemingly emerging victorious in Yemen with the Houthi regime remaining in de facto control. How will each country's approach to Iran influence their willingness to reach an accord with Israel?
- **Role of Saudi Arabia:** If Saudi Arabia signs a normalization agreement, countries like Oman, Kuwait, Indonesia could follow it. Saudi Arabia will thus use its importance to maximize concessions in negotiations. Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman has already shown his interest in taking bold decisions in shaping the future of the kingdom.
- **Palestinian issue:** Do these accords prevent Israeli-Palestinian peace by normalizing the status quo, do they advance the likelihood of peace by bringing countries together and reducing animosity, or should they be approached as completely unrelated issues?
- **Concessions needed:** Each country will look to get promises that are relevant, for example Morocco's agreement included recognition of its claims over Western Sahara, while the UAE received guarantees about sales of US fighter jets. What will each new country look for, and will the US or other countries agree?
- **Regional stability:** After a particularly difficult two years, culminating with the fall of President Assad in Syria, and concerns over stability in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen, can the Abraham Accords lead to a greater regional stability pact?

- **Technology and innovation:** Can a regional hub for sharing technological development motivate cooperation and synergy?
- **Tourism:** Tourism between different countries offers immediate economic benefits, as well as opportunity for cultural exchange.
- **Environmental cooperation:** With shared environmental concerns, like water access and clean energy development, what role will environmental issues play in the negotiations?
- **Security:** Houthi attacks on shipping lanes, as well as Islamic State and other non-state militias, make regional security cooperation a priority for regional actors as well as trade partners and allies abroad.

Guiding questions:

- What is your country's relationship with Israel and the US?
- Where is your country located?
- Which countries might benefit most from such agreements?
- What would each country look to gain in the negotiations?
- How can regional security be improved?
- How will fear of Iran and/or non-state actors like Islamic State impact decisions?
- What role can outside actors play in facilitating peace accords?
- How would such an agreement impact Israeli-Palestinian peace accords (the next topic)

Learn More:

- <https://www.aapeaceinstitute.org/>
- [2023 report](#)
- <https://www.misgavins.org/en/abraham-accords-2/>
- [Abraham Accords 2.0?](#)
- [Trump's influence on regional peace](#)
- <https://www.inss.org.il/publication/navy/>
- <https://www.hoover.org/research/abraham-accords-and-changing-shape-middle-east>
- [New to Normal: 2 Years Analysis](#)
- <https://www.fpri.org/article/2020/09/abraham-accord-view-gulf/>
- [Shaping future of global oil trade](#)

Watch/Listen:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XecVVAfjII>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJ2S5PaSQ60>

Israeli-Palestinian Peace Accords



“Independent Arab and Jewish States and the Special International Regime for the City of Jerusalem, set forth in Part III of this Plan, shall come into existence in Palestine two months after the evacuation of the armed forces of the mandatory Power has been completed but in any case not later than 1 October 1948.” ---

UNGA Resolution 181 (1947 “Partition Plan”)

Summary

The creation of Palestinian and Jewish states in the area of British Mandate Palestine has been debated since well before [UN Resolution 181](#) called for the creation of two independent states in 1947. The initial creation of Israel, and the subsequent Arab-Israeli armed conflict, changed the situation on the ground drastically, as a significant portion of the Palestinian Arab population was displaced to Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, and the political movement for a Palestinian state was significantly weakened. Geographically, the land designated for a Palestinian state was divided, and fell under the control of Egypt, Jordan and Israel.

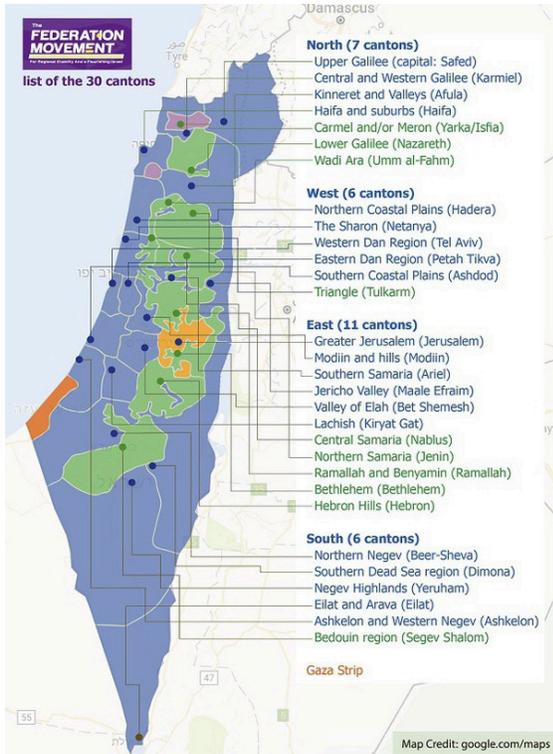
Initially the movement for the creation of Palestine was dominated by Arab states. Since then Palestinian political groups (the [PLO](#) and the [PA](#)) have taken a more prominent role in negotiations with Israeli leaders. Several proposals and negotiations have been made, most significantly the Oslo Accords, but ultimately a comprehensive, mutually agreed upon agreement has yet to be reached. A Palestinian declaration of statehood was made by the PLO in 1988, but its legitimacy is disputed. The UN, US, Saudi Arabia, and various other actors have also tried to lead the way towards an agreement between Israeli and Palestinian leadership.

In recent years, many Israelis and Palestinians have lost hope in the bilateral negotiations process. While the Israeli and Palestinian governments coordinate on security and other issues, there is no momentum for negotiations. Instead unilateral measures are pursued by both sides. In 2012, the General Assembly voted to recognize Palestine as a non-member observer state, and in 2015 the UNGA passed a vote allowing non-member observer states (such as Palestine) to fly their flags at the UN, with Israel and the US among the eight member states voting against the resolution. Israel for its part has [considered annexation of much of the West Bank](#), which would make a two state solution nearly impossible. Instead, the Israeli government pivoted to a series of normalization agreements (ie the [Abraham Accords](#)), which would seem to undermine the power of the Arab Peace Initiative ([API](#)). Most recently, the 2023-2024 war and change on the ground in Gaza, as well as evolving realities in neighboring Lebanon and Syria, and new US administration, are all factors that may influence the trajectory of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

Key Issues:

- **Trust**—right now neither side trusts the other. Part of this process must involve reestablishing faith in the process and in one another via confidence-building steps.
- **Gaza**—The future of Gaza is the most pressing issue, as the area faces both urgent short-term humanitarian challenges, as well as long-term issues after months of warfare, from constructing homes to public infrastructure, to economic development, and the need for demilitarization.. Will Gaza be connected to the West Bank or kept separate?

- **Political stability**—Israel has struggled to form a stable coalition, with four elections in three years. The Palestinian Authority has ruled without elections for over a decade, and struggles with popular support and legitimacy among Palestinian.
- **Water**—Water is understandably a vital resource in the Middle East, and as such it plays a [key role in these negotiations](#). One of the key issues which must be addressed is an effective, fair and efficient way to share and care for the water resources in the region.
- **Security and Freedom of Mobility**—two intertwined issues—Palestinians seek the ability to travel without restrictions, while Israel requires guarantees of its security.
- **Economic cooperation**—Israelis and Palestinians can benefit from working together and connecting the economies. Economic cooperation can be a [stepping stone to peace](#)
- **Final Borders**—eventually final borders must be discussed. This raises the issue of settlements, and whether a [land swap](#) will be used to allow Israel to keep the main areas it holds in the West Bank (near Ariel, Gush Etsion and Ma’ale Adumim), while trading other land to be part of a Palestinian state. [UNSC Resolution 242](#) calls for Israel to return to the 1967 borders—however the resolution’s wording is considered to be [ambiguous enough](#) as to possibly allow Israel to remain on some of the land it got after 1967.
- **Refugees and Right of Return**—Palestinians have been unwilling to give up the [right of return](#) for descendants of Palestinians who lived in present-day Israel, while Israel won’t risk having its demographics shifted so radically, potentially having to choose between being a Jewish or a democratic state. Finding a compromise here will be very difficult.
- **Jerusalem**—originally intended to be an international city. After Israel’s founding it was held by Jordan and then Israel. Both sides hold claim to this city, and it holds symbolic and religious value. Neither side is willing to give up its claim, but there are plenty who protest dividing it as well. In short—[this issue is difficult to resolve](#) from all sides.
- **Outside relations**—In the [Arab Peace Initiative](#), better relations with surrounding Arab countries was used as an incentive for Israeli cooperation. Is this still relevant following the Abraham Accords? What other outside issues (ISIS; Iran-Saudi conflict; refugee crises in neighboring countries) could affect the agreement?



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Ways forward

- **Two state solution:** The most common approach, championed by the UN 1947 partition plan and numerous efforts since then, as well as the starting point of official proposals. This involves having two states (Israel and Palestine), with the final borders and other key details resolved via negotiations. The [Geneva Accords](#) present a good example.
- **One state solution:** Different variations, but the basic idea is one idea and one government for all citizens, on a democratic model, possibly taking inspiration from Lebanon (where government positions are reserved for each of the major religious groups or ethnic communities).
- **Confederation:** Alternative solutions have tried to thread the needle between a one state solution and two state solution, by finding unity between Israelis and Palestinians, while still giving them each some measure of independence. The confederation approach calls for Israel and Palestine to be two states with two national governments joined in a confederation, with designated shared responsibilities and institutions.
- **Federation:** The Federation solution follows a US/Swiss model of federal and local responsibilities. There would be one country with a national government holding some responsibilities, while local city and municipal governments would have additional powers, thus ensuring that Arab and Jewish cities had their own authority but were part of one united country.

¹ <https://medium.com/illumination/the-federation-solution-to-israel-palestine-6f07df9eb872>

- **Three state solution:** Yet another approach tries to reconcile the separation of Gaza and the West Bank (geographically and in terms of government) by realizing a need for two distinct Palestinian states (one in the West Bank and one in Gaza) along with Israel, or a Palestinian state in Gaza, a Jewish state in Israel, and a binational one in the West Bank.²

Links:

- [Different models](#)
- [Polling preferences](#)
- [Federation](#)
- [Confederal solution](#)
- [3 states](#) and [here](#)
- [Alternative 3 state](#)
- [One state transition](#)
- [1 state - 2 state](#)
- [Two vs 1](#)
- [Timeline 1](#)
- [2 vs 1](#)
- [Aim high or Aim low](#)
- [Armistice Suggestions](#)
- [Negotiations Dead?](#)
- [Rawabi—Water sharing](#)
- [Water deal](#)
- [Water suggestions](#)
- [Trump peace plans](#)
- [2016 Quartet Report](#)
- [Save the Peace Process](#)
- [Negotiations overview](#)
- [Settlements](#)
- [CfR Report](#)
- [Abbas was ready to compromise](#)
- [Report on Borders](#)
- [Resolution 242](#)

Watch:

- [Vox The conflict explained](#)
- [CrashCourse World History](#)
- [President Obama](#)

Resolutions:

- [Key UN Resolutions Explained](#)
- [UNGA 1947 Resolution on Palestine](#)
- [UNGA 1947 Resolution \(Easier to Read format\)](#)
- [UNSC Resolution 242 Text](#)
- [UN Security Council Reports](#)

² <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/israel-middle-east/articles/three-state-solution-benjamin-kerstein-peace-israel-palestine>