

The UN Security Council and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: disproportionate neglect

January 2020

“The silence by the [Security] Council on [Israel/Palestine] is ever more deafening and incomprehensible.”
France, UN Security Council, March 2019.¹

Summary - UNSC resolutions on Israel/Palestine: disproportionately few

It is often claimed that the United Nations is passing a disproportionate number of resolutions related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

However, this leaves the most important UN body out of the picture: the UN Security Council.

Therefore, EuMEP has conducted a breakdown of all UNSC resolutions and presidential statements adopted over the last 10 years, since the beginning of 2010 till December 2019.

Key findings:

- Out of **596** UNSC resolutions on conflict issues worldwide, only **1** was adopted on Israel/Palestine.²
- Out of **239** UNSC presidential statements adopted, only **2** concerned Israel/Palestine.

This shows that the number of resolutions and statements on Israel/Palestine in the UN Security Council is in fact *disproportionately low*.

There is indeed a relatively high number of Israel-related resolutions in other UN bodies, such as the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council. However, the Security Council is the *primary UN body responsible for peace and security* and its resolutions have the greatest weight. The numerous resolutions in other UN bodies are generally less consequential.

Conclusion:

Claims that the UN is singling out Israel by adopting a disproportionate number of resolutions are deeply selective and misleading because they leave the UNSC out of the picture. Given the primacy of the UNSC within the UN system, the opposite is more true: there is a disproportionate neglect of Israel/Palestine.

¹ “Israel/Palestine: silence by Security Council is deafening and incomprehensible” - Statement by François Delattre, Permanent Representative of France to the UNSC, 26 March 2019. <https://onu.delegfrance.org/Israel-Palestine-silence-by-Security-Council-is-deafening-and-incomprehensible>

² The resolutions is UNSCR 2334 (December 2016) adopted at the end of the Obama administration.

Vetoes and non-compliance

The UNSC inaction on Israel/Palestine stems from the United States' vetoes and threats to veto resolutions on the conflict.

Since 1967, the US has vetoed 44 UNSC resolutions related to Israel, out of which 16 since 1990. Since 1967, these vetoes represent 54% of the total number of resolutions vetoed by the US and 36% of total resolutions vetoed by any country in the UNSC.³ Due to the US veto pattern, resolutions on Israel/Palestine are rarely being proposed in the UNSC.

The high number of resolutions in bodies such as UNGA and UNHRC, where the US does not have a veto power, should be seen in the light of the UNSC blockage. Partly, they are a response to it. They are also a symptom of the longest running military occupation in the world, as well as a legacy of developing countries' anti-colonial agenda in the UN since the 1960s and 1970s. In a similar way, there used to be a large number of periodic UN resolutions on South Africa which only ceased with the end of apartheid in 1994.

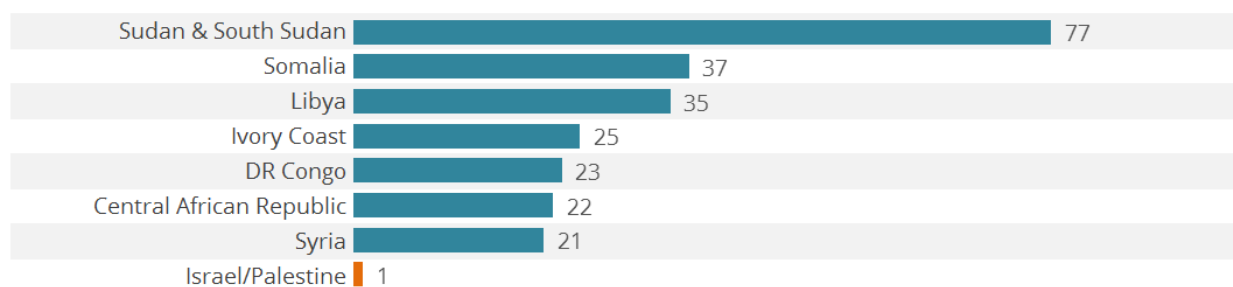
The key point in this context is that the UNSC resolutions that actually have been adopted on the conflict – from UNSCR 242 in 1967 to UNSCR 2334 in 2016 – have not been implemented and continue to be violated all the time, especially through the expansion of Israeli settlements. The UNSC has been unable to uphold its own decisions. Once again, this is mainly because of the disproportionate shielding of the Israeli government in the UNSC. More than anything else, **this should be the focus of anyone concerned about UN imbalance regarding Israel and Palestine.**

UNSC Resolutions

Chart 1: UNSC Resolutions adopted – January 2010 – December 2019⁴

UNSC Resolutions (adopted)

January 2010 - December 2019



- Total number of resolutions adopted: **596**
- Total number of *country or region specific* resolutions adopted: **527**
- Concerning Israel/Palestine: **1**

Chapter VI vs. Chapter VII: While over 50% of UNSC resolutions since 2010 have been adopted under the more stringent Chapter VII, the resolution on Israel/Palestine as well as all those since 1967 were adopted under Chapter VI and did not involve any threat of sanctions for non-compliance. Chapter VII is

³ Source of information: UNSC website listing all vetoes: <http://research.un.org/en/docs/sc/quick/veto>

⁴ Source of information: UNSC website listing all resolutions: <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/resolutions>

used for resolutions that require countries to comply with their terms – e.g. on the withdrawal of military forces – while Chapter VI resolutions are intended to be followed by negotiations between relevant parties.

Table 1: UNSC Resolutions adopted – January 2010 - December 2019

Country/conflict	number of resolutions
Sudan & South Sudan	77
Somalia	37
Libya	35
Ivory Coast	25
DR Congo	23
Central African Republic	22
Syria	21
Afghanistan	21
Golan Heights (Israel/Syria)	20
Cyprus	19
Iraq	17
Liberia	17
North Korea	17
Former Yugoslavia/ICTY	13
Haiti	13
Yemen	13
Mali	13
Piracy – Somalia	13
Western Sahara	12
Guinea-Bissau	12
ISIL/Al-Qaida/terrorism	11
Rwanda (ICTR)	10
Lebanon	10
Bosnia and Herzegovina	9
Burundi	7
Iran	7
Colombia/FARC	7
Sierra Leone	6
Nepal	3
Central African Region	3
East Timor	3
Eritrea	2
Piracy – Gulf of Guinea	2
Ukraine	2
Sahel	2
Israel/Palestine	1
Gambia	1
Boko Haram	1

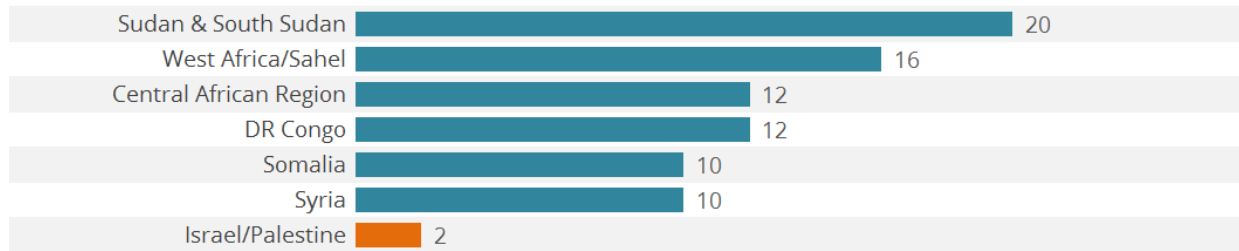
UNSC Presidential Statements

Presidential statements are made by the rotating UNSC Presidency on behalf of the whole Council. Unlike resolutions, they are not legally binding. However, they require the consensus of UNSC members and are adopted at formal meetings of the Council.

Chart 2: UNSC Presidential Statements – January 2010 - December 2019⁵

UNSC Presidential Statements

January 2010 - December 2019



- Total number of Presidential Statements: **239**
- Total number of *country or region specific* Presidential Statements: **172**
- Concerning Israel/Palestine: **2**

Table 2: UNSC Presidential Statements – January 2010 - December 2019

Country/conflict	number of statements
Sudan & South Sudan	20
West Africa/Sahel	16
Central African Region	12
DR Congo	12
Somalia	10
Syria	10
Central African Republic	8
Yemen	8
Afghanistan	7
Mali	7
Peace and security in Africa	6
Guinea-Bissau	5
Iraq	5
Burundi	5
ISIL/Al-Qaida/terrorism	5
Libya	5
Sierra Leone	4
Golan Heights (Syria/Israel)	3
North Korea	3
Boko Haram	3
Lebanon	3
Haiti	2
Israel/Palestine	2
Colombia/FARC	2
Liberia	2
Nepal	1
Ivory Coast	1
Great Lakes region	1
Iraq and Kuwait	1
Myanmar	1
Timor-Leste	1
Ukraine	1

⁵ Source of information: UNSC website listing all presidential statements: <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/presidential-statements>