

Forum: United Nations Development Programme

Issue #2: Addressing Post-Conflict reconstruction and humanitarian aid in the Middle East

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Townsend, Mark. "Middle East Thrust into "Apocalyptic" Humanitarian Crisis by War and Turmoil." The Guardian, The Guardian, 22 Jan. 2024, www.theguardian.com/global-development/2024/jan/22/middle-east-apocalyptic-humanitarian-crisis-war-humanitarian-aid-israel-gaza-yemen? Accessed 24 July 2025.

Introduction

War everywhere destroys lives, livelihoods, and infrastructure. Once peace is achieved,

people who have survived must rebuild their lives, economies, and the country. Unfortunately, civilian infrastructure is heavily damaged during a war, including houses, roads, hospitals, schools, and water systems. This is always topped by families facing hunger and medical needs, by the post-war demobilization of soldiers, and by the need to create jobs and generate income for everyone. For instance, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimates that it would take between \$350 billion and \$650 billion to rebuild the Middle East, including Gaza's portion of \$53 billion and Syria's \$400 billion (as of 2024). In comparison, the World Bank (WB) estimates that the post-war reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1990s cost \$5 billion. These numbers often do not account for many critical services, such as psychological support, child vaccinations, and necessities like electricity or urban transportation.

The Middle East has endured ongoing conflict since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire following World War I. Countries such as Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Libya, Syria, Kuwait, Lebanon, Israel, and Palestine have all been at war one way or another, with or without the involvement of superpower countries. These conflicts have contributed to many socio-economic and economic challenges in countries in the Middle East. For example, the World Bank considers Yemen, Sudan, Syria, and Somalia as underdeveloped countries in the region due to low incomes and an overall lack of stability. In the case of the Palestinian territories, aid has been continuously provided to help the population remain afloat. Numerous refugee camps have been created, such as the ones in Turkey during the recent Syrian conflict and the ones in Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt. Reconstruction programs have also been sponsored in many Arab States, such as Turkey, Syria, and Egypt, among a few, by the UNDP. Weather aid and post-war reconstruction have contributed to long-lasting prosperity for the population, but the issue remains to be evaluated in many parts of this region. In some cases (i.e., the Israel-Palestine conflict), the root causes of conflict have not been addressed, failing countless aid and reconstruction attempts.

Today, a country like Syria offers an opportunity for effective aid and reconstruction to make a difference. After more than a decade of an internal war that started with the Arab Spring of 2010, domestic groups have been trying to expel a repressive dictator. The UN estimates that this conflict displaced around 21 million people while at the same time destroying the economy and all sources of livelihood; in 2024, a rebel group led by Ahmed al-Sharaa finally ended the regime of Bashar Al Assad, which has lasted 24 years, and the Syrian people are now in search of a new future. A population of almost 24.7 million is starving, 90% of the population is living in poverty (UN 2025), roads and other basic infrastructure have been destroyed, and the economy suffers from a lack of production, exports, and hyperinflation (ORI - read WB Syria MPO of March 2025). To confront these challenges, international support through food aid and reconstruction assistance will make a difference.

In contrast, the conflict between Israel and Palestine shows no signs of being resolved or achieving stable peace. Many countries, including the United States, France, and Qatar, have supported aid and Reconstruction programs. However, this conflict has deep historical, political, and ideological roots, which cannot be solved by financial investments alone. In such a context, aid and reconstruction are often helpful in keeping families afloat, but a self-sustaining society is unlikely to emerge and thrive.

A "post" conflict aid and reconstruction program is successful only if sustainable peace has been achieved. Another precondition for reconstruction success is that international support be generous and sustained over time, often focused not just on financial contributions for, say, roads but on demobilizing previously combatting groups and overseeing the peace process. However, in the war between Israel and Palestine, there are many different countries and organizations involved who oppose or agree with the beliefs of one side or the other, or have chosen to stay as neutral as possible. Due to this, some may believe that the war has just begun, while others believe the war is ready to come to an end. Yet, the Israel/Palestine conflict is not just about controlling

the territory of the Gaza Strip or even Jerusalem; it has become a fight for identity and nationalism. Both the Israeli and Palestinian cultures, religions, and overall societies claim to have been born in these places.

The Israel/Palestine war is such a dense conflict that it is far from reaching a peace. There is a significant need for constructive dialogue among the parties involved in the conflict, building on the Oslo Accords (1993-1995), with the additional support of previously resolved conflicts. The relatively well-sustained peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a case in point, where heavy international intervention led two parties that had been at war to sit together and sign the 1995 Dayton Accords. In the meantime, aid should flow to the populations in need while building on long-term solutions.

To pinpoint the exact start of the Israel-Palestine conflict is nearly impossible, and finding who is fully responsible is an idea that does not exist. Both sides have drawn their fair share, including the 6-day war, countless bombings, targeted killings or mass slaughters, destruction of infrastructure, and leaving millions of people without homes on both sides. Today, what is clear is that neither nation has achieved prosperity for its nation. Israel is a prosperous and sophisticated high-income country where families need to run to underground refugees very often, and their lives are at risk even by just going to a concert. According to a recent article in The Economist, Israel would have had to spend 20% of its national income to sustain its recent 12-day fight with Iran, which required roughly 100 flights a day covering a distance of more than 1000 km. The Palestinian side also spends people's time and money digging out tunnels and building up terrorist groups rather than educating its people and making them prosperous. Iran followed a similar route – spending billions of dollars on arms and terrorism rather than on the education of its people and the infrastructure required by its economy. Why should countries endure economic and social deprivation for ideological or historical reasons?

While Israel and Palestine find a way to live sustainably with each other, should the international community gather support for the Syrian people? If Syria were to go back to chaos and destruction, it would not just undermine peace in the Middle East but also drag the international community deeper and more permanently into this region's conflicts. Syria can also play a crucial role in pacifying the Israel/Palestinian region since its new government is willing to discuss peace, if not full recognition of Israel.

Definition of Key Terms

Humanitarian Aid: An emergency (short-term) help during and after a crisis to save lives, such as by providing food, medicine, etc.

Post-conflict Reconstruction: A process of providing aid to consolidate peace and to rebuild a society after a period of violent conflict.

Terrorist Group: An organization that utilizes violence to gain an ideological, political, or religious goal while usually harming civilians to convey or amplify their message.

Terrorism: The use or the threat of violence against people or property in the name of a specific belief.

General Overview

The Main Idea

Providing humanitarian aid and helping with Post-Conflict reconstruction requires a careful treadmill. Firstly, both humanitarian and reconstruction aid are costly and lengthy, meaning they need to be funded based on international contributions. Second, once money is secured, there is a need to establish an institutional framework capable of using these funds to reduce the inequalities to a level regarded as 'fair.'

That institutional framework will need to utilize international funding to address the root causes of conflict permanently, which only it can do. This is why that money needs to flow until the institutional framework is effective. To address the root cause, aid and reconstruction, as well as their institutional framework, must be designed with attention to detail and should cater to the needs of the entire population – not just the privileged minority. (UN)

The amount of funds needed to provide humanitarian aid and finance reconstruction varies from country to country. A solution that could have worked 50 years ago, even in the same country or conflict, will not be applicable again - as times change, the needs of the population change, and the nature and root causes of conflict might also change. For instance, in the 21st century, mental health is a priority once sustainable peace is achieved. In addition to famine, medical assistance: "There is also evidence of a high incidence of mental disorders among the displaced population. Some estimates put the proportion of refugees suffering from "acute clinical depression and post-traumatic stress disorders" at between 40 and 70 percent (World Bank 2004, p. 26)."

Issues related to Humanitarian Aid in the Short Term

In the short term, and assuming the issues of funding and procurement are settled, aid distribution can be challenging: (i) who should distribute aid, a neutral party or the winner of the conflict? (ii) How to avoid that aid being used for patronage by an influential local group? (iii) and on the logistics side, how many points of aid distribution are arranged? How can we avoid a population that is desperate for food and not killing each other over the lines? Etc. Clearly, food aid will always be a key issue in conflict and post-conflict situations. For instance, in May 2025, the UN stated that "100 percent of the population" of Gaza was "at risk of famine," making feeding the population a key short-term issue for the international community. In the past, the UN

provided and distributed aid to Gaza, but there had been reports of Hamas stealing aid from civilians in need and using it for political motives. There were also reports that Hamas groups infiltrated aid distribution teams to hide their soldiers and weapons. With these accusations coming forth, a new organization backed up by Israel and the US emerged, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF). The organization set up four "Secure distribution Sites" backed up by private US contractors. The task at hand was huge: the GHF promised to feed 1.2 million of the 2.1 million people in Gaza, or 60% of the population. The GHF has provided "462,000 meals through a partnership with local non-governmental organizations," according to the BBC. However, it is also reported that the first day of aid distribution was very chaotic. Hungry people who had not eaten in a long time were forced to wait for 50 people to cross at a time. This ended in "people climbed over the gates, attacked others, and took all the [aid]." BBC

Furthermore, the legitimacy of the GHF is in question. The organization is not approved by the UN nor Hamas, the latter of which has encouraged Palestinians not to cooperate. When alerted of the situation, the UN spokesman Stéphane Dujarric said, "We and our partners have a detailed, principled, operationally sound plan supported by member states to get aid to a desperate population. We continue to stress that a meaningful scale-up of humanitarian operations is essential to stave off famine and meet the needs of all civilians wherever they are," he added. In response, the US State Department's spokeswoman called the UN's criticism "the height of hypocrisy. Tammy Bruce (a commenter) told reporters that (these UN comments) "are unfortunate because the issue here is giving aid to Gaza, and then suddenly it moves into complaints about style or the nature of who is doing it,"(BBC). The point here is that aid distribution methods can be quickly politicized. In the meantime, the UN estimates that half a million people will face starvation in the upcoming months. Why not choose a neutral party to provide aid? (e.g., Egypt? Europe? Qatar or Brazil, if not the UN?)

Reconstruction Challenges

Post-conflict reconstruction is not only about physical infrastructure, which is nonetheless very important, but also about rebuilding the economy: the source of jobs and income for people who bear the heaviest toll in a conflict (Israel/Gaza, Ukraine, or WWII). The UN Special Envoy Geir Pedersen said after the Assad regime in Syria in December 2024 that "international support will have to go beyond the humanitarian in terms of economic development, reconstruction, and a process to address and ultimately end sanctions." (Wilson Centre). Apart from the violent outcome of the conflict, Middle Eastern countries are struggling with unemployment. The unemployment rate is hard to combat, especially when the new government in Syria is struggling to address a 79% inflation rate at the start of 2025. (World Bank). In Iran, concerns persist regarding economic issues, including inflation, unemployment, and corruption. Their currency dropped from 600,000 rials to a dollar in Aug 2024 to 920,000 in March 2025. Over the past "seven years, for example, per capita income, on average, was 45% higher in countries without conflict," according to the World Bank and Wilson Centre. "This loss is equivalent to 35 years' worth of progress in the region."

It has been said that reconstruction efforts will take decades, and the amount of post-conflict efforts required is the largest since the end of World War II in 1945, which creates many questions and few answers. "Can such massive funding be possible without achieving a sustainable peace settlement? And is funding the only challenge?" UPI. It is estimated that the complete construction in the East of the Middle East will cost between \$350 billion and \$400 billion, including Gaza's portion of \$53 billion and Syria's \$400 billion. UNDP.

Nevertheless, this includes "reviving war-devastated economies, restoring efficient government functions and institutions, rebuilding social cohesion and trust, and strengthening the resilience of local communities to withstand future crises," according

to UPI. However, in terms of infrastructure in Gaza, there are 50 million tons of rubble caused by Israel's attacks, and the Palestinian Ministry of Health has estimated that there are at least 10,000 bodies buried underneath the debris, according to a UN assessment. Ultimately, addressing the root causes of the conflicts and preventing future violence is essential.

Refugees and Internally Displaced People

In this conflict, the refugees most commonly seen are internally displaced people (IDPs) who have moved from place to place due to violent conflict or, less typically, natural disasters common in the Middle East. It is estimated that 16.6 million people have been forcibly displaced, and stateless people are seen in the Middle East (2022), according to UNHCR, which is considered 23% of IDPs globally. The number has increased from 2021 to 15.7 million refugees. The Palestine Return Centre, fighting for their rights, has stated that there are no assured fundamental human rights granted to the Palestinian refugees currently located in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the West Bank, or Gaza. Furthermore, Syria, the most densely populated country in terms of its land area, has also had its fair share of refugees. In 2025, because of the Syrian crisis, around 7.4 million people were displaced and sought refuge around the region (5 million), and in Turkey, 3 million. Yet, it has made a comeback as some refugees are starting to return to their home country with the end of the civil war and the installation of their new government. This problem began a long time ago; for example, the Arab Spring in the late 2010s resulted in 2.9 million new internal displacements per year. They have to face destroyed homes, food insecurity, access to basic services, and risks of expulsion from many countries, among few issues. As of the end of 2019, 12.5 million people in that area were still considered refugees, including 3.6 million people from Yemen and 2.3 million in Palestine and more(2019).

Psychological and Social Impact

Although massive portions of the conflict revolve around finding a peaceful solution, the economic status of countries, the aid that will be needed, and often overlooked is what will happen to the citizens once the conflict is over, as well as to the soldiers who have spent their lives at war. Each of the 2.1 million individuals in Gaza, 10 million in Israel, or 5 million in Palestine has undergone constant, nonstop conflict. Years of their lives have been spent without stability and without much precaution about what event would happen next. They have lived through violent armed conflicts, hostage situations, etc. "Collectively, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region forms the global hotspot for the proportion of mental health disorders as a share of the total disease burden." Economist Impact. "Disease burden" refers to the impact of illness or, more specifically, injury on a population, which, in a state of war, one can imagine, is high. Furthermore, the mental illness of post-traumatic stress disorder, prevalent in veterans from the war, is one that one can imagine should be common throughout this conflict. Therefore, once the major issues, such as those mentioned throughout, have been addressed, there should be a follow-up on the citizens' not only physical but also emotional well-being.

Additionally, when armed forces are needed due to violent conflicts, the demobilization of armies and individual soldiers must be considered. This implies a process where there is a formal discharge of all active combatants in the military, transitioning them back to their civilian, peaceful lives. This is essential to transition them from their fight or flight instincts to their old lives, for example, with their family.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

United States of America

The United States of America (USA) is a major country involved not only because it is a superpower but also due to its numerous contributions to the Middle East, which increased significantly after World War II. The US has diplomatic relationships with every country in the Middle East except Iran due to the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the Hostage situation of 1979. More recently, the US has shifted to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict while limiting the spread of weapons and, therefore, destruction in the Middle East, including Iran. This help has been provided through military troops, which, in 2024, at the peak of the war, numbered nearly 45,000 troops. Furthermore, their contributions to aid Israel have reached "\$310 billion (adjusted for inflation) in total economic and military assistance." (Merrow). Israel is seen as a major non-NATO ally in the eyes of the US. Moreover, they have provided significant humanitarian aid, most recently establishing the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation in collaboration with Israel to deliver aid to Gaza. On a long-term approach, the US has donated significant amounts of money to initiatives such as Iraq's post-war reconstruction efforts. However, through changes in presidencies, strategies, and processes, the approach has differed to allow for the progression of a solution to the Israel and Palestine conflict.

Hamas

Hamas, known as an Islamist militant group coming from a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood founded by Ahmed Yassin in 1987, is known as one of the biggest terrorist groups in the world, according to dozens of countries, including the US. Its goal is "It wants a state based on Islam in its place and across the occupied West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza." (BBC News), similar to the territory the British Mandate for Palestine once had. Its name initially meant "Islamic Resistance Movement," and, most

notably, it had controlled the Gaza Strip since winning the election against Fatah in 2007. Hamas has been in and out of conflict with Israel for decades; however, most recently, an upscale attack on Israel happened on 7 October 2023, killing about 1,200 people and kidnapping around 250 hostages. The terrorist group's main allies have been Iran, Turkey(financial and political support), and Qatar (host of its political office), among a few. Apart from all the crimes the group has committed, it has been accused of stealing humanitarian aid for Gaza provided by the United Nations. Although they notably play an important role in the Middle East with Humanitarian aid and post-conflict reconstruction topics, they massively slow down efforts and initiatives for aid in this area. By creating more instability, chaos, and unsafe conditions, it is challenging to maintain stable development strategies that can stabilize countries in the Middle East.

Syria

Syria has been a country that has faced much political instability in the Middle East. Recently, the Syrian civil war began in 2011 due to disapproval of the Ba'athist regime ruled by Bashar al-Assad, which created two major sides: the pro-Assad and the pro-democracy. This war ended recently in December 2024 after creating the largest refugee population in the world, around 6.7 million (2018). Both sides of the Syrian civil war received help from countries such as (pro-Assad ruling) Russia and Iran, and (pro-democracy) the US, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), among a few. Moreover, They have faced terrorist attacks from ISIS, Nusrah Front, Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and Islamic Front. Recently, they have attempted to reconstruct their country post-conflict, including organizing a new government led by Mohammed al-Bashir. In recent events, Israel launched attacks on Iran (June 2025), and Syria has stayed quiet, which is a sign of the shift in its approaches to attempt to regroup its own country. Syria has made it clear that Iran, a

once close ally, but with the change in government they have restricted Iran's proxies in Syria and pledged that it would not allow any armed groups to launch attacks into Israel from Syrian soil.

Israel

Israel is one of the two leading countries involved and affected in the Middle East. After a solution is found to the ongoing conflict, they will be one of the countries that will need the most humanitarian and reconstruction aid. The roots of this conflict are traced back to the British rule in 1917, which ended when it declared Israel an official country in 1948. The causes of the conflict can be traced back a century or more. The primary factor in the conflict is the ownership of religious lands, such as the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. However, through time, the goal expanded beyond territory and moved towards identity and pride. However, the effects of these chains of events include widespread infrastructure damage, as well as political and economic instability, among other examples. Even with significant international support, the economic state of Israel will be impacted, even with the \$ 14.5 billion supplemental funding and the \$ 3 billion annual aid the US has provided starting in 2024. (Kozul-Wright). Notably, in 2024, 72% of the Israeli population agreed that they wanted the US to contribute to diplomatically ending the war (Chavda). To reconstruct Israel as a whole, collaborative international aid will be necessary for both short-term and long-term initiatives. The United States and Israel are two of the most dynamic allies in this region. Together, they have founded a non-profit organization to deliver emergency and humanitarian aid in the Gaza Strip. The efforts for sustainable recovery are noticeable; however, there is a need for a more structured and inclusive organizational framework to rebuild Israel and create a stable livelihood.

Palestine

Palestine is the other most active actor, apart from Israel, involved and affected in the Middle East. Palestine believes that the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem are rightfully theirs and are the territory they currently occupy. They have received Aid from the EU since 2000. More than €1.35 billion has been given to Palestine after the October 7th attack, and they have transported over 4,800 tonnes of cargo ("EU Humanitarian Support for Palestinians"). It is estimated that 52,928 Palestinians have been killed and around 120,000 injured (Mohamed and Magee). Adding the famine, fuel shortages, leaving hospitals dry, and the destruction of infrastructure have made Palestine a country of dire need. From an economic standpoint, the UN states that "the ratio of Gaza's GDP per capita to that of the West Bank fell from parity in 1994 to 44 per cent in 2007 and reached 28 per cent in 2022." The world's most populated area (X persons per square km) will need help to reconstruct its physical infrastructure, starting with the housing stock and all utilities that would make life easier again. It also needs sustained aid to reduce famine and malnourishment and restart a basic health and education system. But it also needs a deeper level of reconstruction effort to resuscitate its economy and generate productive jobs. Only through a comprehensive reconstruction program such as the one just mentioned will people be able to rebuild their spirits and their hope for living a normal 21st-century life.

Timeline of Events, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

1947

The United Nations created Resolution 181, known as the Partition Plan, which sought to divide the territory the British had occupied into Palestine for the Arab communities and the Jewish state (BBC).

May 14, 1948	The State of Israel sparked the first Arab-Israeli War, which ended in 1949, leaving 750,000 Palestinians displaced(BBC). This created the original division of the State of Israel, comprising the West Bank (west of the Jordan River) and the Gaza Strip (BBC).
June 1967	During this time, the Six-Day War happened. Egypt and Syria attacked Israel, and it ended in a ceasefire. Israel gained territorial control over the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip, which Egypt previously had, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, which Jordan had control over, and the Golan Heights from Syria (BBC).
1979	The Iranian Revolution resulted in the establishment of the "Nezam" as the current ruling power in Iran (Britannica).
1980-88	In the Iran- Iran-Iraq War, Iran invaded Iran, and ended when the United Nations administered a ceasefire. However, neither side "won"; instead, it had lasting impacts on the Middle East. Post-war, both countries faced infrastructure damage, which created UN-administered initial humanitarian aid (Wikipedia).
1990-1	During the First Gulf War, Iraq invaded Kuwait and was stopped by a US-led coalition with 42 other countries (Britannica).
1993	The first attempt at a peace treaty, known as the Oslo

Accord, was where both parties recognized each other, and the result was the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). In addition, this marks the start of international collaboration for aid in the Middle East (BBC).

1995 The process for peace was developing in the Second Oslo Accords, yet it ended after Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by extremist Palestinians, throwing away any ideas of peace (BBC).

2001 In the Arab Spring, a large pro-democracy protest against authoritarian governments aimed to achieve greater freedom. It started in Tunisia but spread to Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, and Bahrain. This led to mass short-term aid responses being delivered, especially in Syria and Libya (Britannica).

2006 Hamas won the Palestinian parliamentary elections, meaning they controlled Gaza. (BBC)

2011 Sprung off the Arab Spring, the Syrian War was when the population was discontent with the current rule of Bashar al-Assad. The fall of the Assad rule was in December 2024 (Britannica).

October 7th, 2023 There were many "smaller" violent attacks on and off between both parties, but in October, it sparked the upscale of events that are currently happening. Hamas launched a full-scale attack on Israel from Gaza, killing

1200 people and taking around 250 hostages (BBC).

June 12-24th, 2025

The 12-day war between Israel and Iran was based on rumors of Iran building a nuclear bomb to attack Israel triggered Israel to seek help from the United States. Who bombed Iran, yet still did not harm the progress of the nuclear bomb (Al Jazeera).

United Nations Involvement

The United Nations has addressed both the Post-Conflict reconstruction and humanitarian aid in the Middle East in different instances

UNDP/UNDG In the Arab States Protects

The UNDP has funded a massive reconstruction, humanitarian support and development project in the MENA/Arab States area with countries including "Palestine, Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen."(UNDP). These projects focus on long-term sustainable impact for a more "resilient and inclusive future" for each country, trying to move past a life full of war.

One of the projects, the Palestinian Employment Initiative "Rebuilding Futures," started in 2024 in collaboration between the UNDP and UNRWA West Bank Field Office (WBFO). Their objective is to deliver short, medium, and long-term job opportunities in various fields, including IT, agriculture, services, and industries, across the West Bank. Their first significant contribution, from Germany, is valued at 25 million euros, and the initiative is expected to create around 8,000 employment opportunities in the West Bank over the

next three years. With around 33,000 people and 150,000 refugees benefiting from social services, including infrastructure and maintenance. ("Rebuilding Futures") "Rebuilding Futures is a response of the Palestinian Ministry of Labor to the unemployment crisis in the West Bank, where the unemployment rate has reached 32% in the second quarter of 2024." The UNDP, with collaborative help, is boosting these countries' economies and reducing unemployment rates, helping to create a post-conflict reconstruction solution.

In addition, another project involved is a new joint initiative to "establish unified digital policies for a thriving regional digital economy" (UNDP), further boosting the Arab States' regional economy as the future will be technologically integrated. The project was created to find solutions to "urgent needs for cohesive digital regulations and policies that support sustainable economic growth." UNDP "Digital Transformation". On a more humanitarian side, the UNDP and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) have launched another program related to "scaling up innovation in water management for climate security in the Northern project." UNDP "Scaling Up Innovation". Not only does this adapt to pressing issues on climate change, but it also meets the needs of current Syrian refugees and their host communities located in Jordan and the Mafraq governorate, which borders Syria. These are among the many initiatives and projects that the UNDP, together with other companies, has launched to help the Middle East not only in the short term, addressing war-related issues, but also for a future beyond the war and for the countries that will achieve peace. However, although these initiatives are a great start, they are too recent to see their impact, and their initiatives are surrounded by political instability, a lack of sustained aid, and a lack of reaching the root causes of the persistent inequalities faced by this area.

UN Syria Humanitarian Aid Delivery

The UN has provided humanitarian aid delivery to Syria for years now, including more than 62,000 trucks of food, medical supplies, emergency shelter, and other aid, which millions of Syrians receive each month, according to the UN. Before the GHF, the United Nations was the primary organization delivering aid to Syrians. In 2024, they were able to raise \$4.07 billion to provide life-saving aid to around 10.8 million Syrians out of 16.7 million people in need of aid, mentioned the Secretary General in a UN council meeting ("There Can Be No Sustainable Recovery"). They have provided help to Syrians to reconstruct their lives post-conflict while maintaining firm advocacy for the protection of civilians during the constant air strikes or attacks. Apart from delivering food or emergency care, they have also been "rehabilitating homes, schools, and hospitals, and providing critical health education and protection services." According to the United Nations. The most prevalent issue with the GHF taking over aid delivery is that it is not a neutral party. For a more successful aid system, a neutral party should take over short-term aid, as the United Nations was doing.

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

The 2003 Madrid International Donors' Conference

The 2003 Madrid International Donors' Conference in 2003 in Madrid was held to help Iraq build a new future for its country after the US-led invasion of Iraq, which began on March 20th, 2002. At that conference, they were able to raise \$33 billion for Iraq's reconstruction aid, including \$5 billion from Japan, \$3-\$5 billion from the World Bank, and \$20 billion from the US, among others. However, there were observations that these efforts, amounting to almost \$60 billion (including other aid mobilization efforts), were not nearly as successful as needed. Hence, "failing to diversify the Iraqi economy and create jobs outside the large public sector"(WB). While the World Bank noted that 25%

of 3000 surveys indicated that job opportunities were not sufficiently developed in previous peacebuilding attempts. Which is why, for future post-conflict and reconstruction attempts in the Middle East, there must be a global understanding of the past and collaboration.

Yemen Donor Conference

In Yemen, there have been ongoing civil wars in the country between the South and the North, leading to the country being separated and reconnecting the South and North. The government has been dominated by gorilla groups such as Al-Qaeda(2008) and the Houthis in 2014. In 2012, amid the transition between the two governing groups, the community, including all communities, including those in Saudi Arabia, raised US\$6.4 million in reconstruction aid for Yemen until 2016. However, apart from that, there have been other attempts, such as implementing federalism in 2014, which was simply unsuccessful. Many solutions have been proposed for how to run reconstruction and post-conflict in a highly volatile country in the Middle East. Most have been criticized for not taking into account the entire past of countries' histories, but more importantly, for not analyzing other peace attempts already made. For instance, the two-state solution in the Israel-Palestine issue, to understand why it did not succeed and what has to be different in future solution attempts, whether that be through more funding or more neutral parties' involvement.

Possible Solutions

To address post-conflict reconstruction and humanitarian aid in the Middle East, a possible solution is to establish locally led reconstruction frameworks for each country in need, while also working hand in hand with neutral parties that fund and oversee the aid distribution and its impact on the communities or population. However, to

implement most solutions, there is a need for safety and security in the zones with the greatest need for assistance. Given the active bombing as an example, the likelihood of receiving humanitarian aid quickly and safely poses a significant challenge. On a long-term level, such as for post-conflict reconstruction, there is a need for a stable country where the international community's implementation of aid from organizations like the UN or a country will not be undone in the subsequent conflict, such as a civil war.

A multi-step approach will be necessary, with assistance from the international community, to oversee the investment. However, a process of retreat from external assistance is necessary in the far future to allow each country to evolve independently and not be dependent on funds from other countries. This way, their economy and even culture remain stable, in long-term conflicts are resolved

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)

SDG #2, Zero Hunger

Goal two, Zero Hunger, is about "creating a world free of hunger by 2030," according to the UN. They have stated that in 2022, nearly 10% of the world's population, or approximately 735 million people, were experiencing famine or chronic hunger. Due to malnutrition, individuals are less productive and more likely to contract diseases, therefore unable to improve their livelihood. Yet, there are many reasons for this, such as inflation, conflict, climate factors, insecurity, and an over decline in food production, which all contribute to the price. To achieve food stability globally, a multi-step solution is required, ranging from social protection to providing nutritious food for children. To facilitate this process, it begins with making changes in each individual's daily life, such as supporting local food production and promoting healthy, nutritious choices. This connects to the post-reconstruction and humanitarian aid topic, as most countries

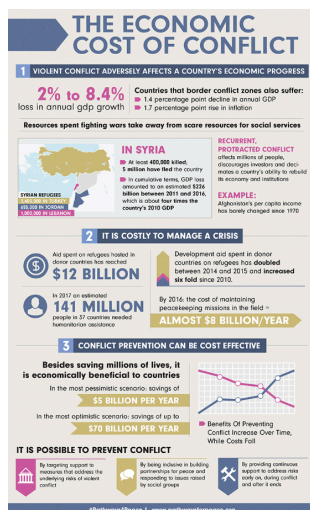
experiencing active conflict are facing different levels of famine. Most aid given throughout the years has been food for starving populations, such as Syria.

Appendix

This section of the issue bulletin is dedicated to providing delegates with valuable sources to utilize during their research.

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/economic-challenges-middle-east-2025>

Source A: The Wilson Center article describes the common issues the Middle East area faces in 2025, including food shortages, inflation, debt, unemployment, Wars, and reconstruction. It helps build understanding and context towards the humanitarian aid challenges faced. By understanding these issues, one can gain insight into how livelihood can be improved and the importance of the topic at hand.



Source B: The World Bank infographic provides insight into how conflict can be a constant presence in countries, offering key information and statistics. Many of the countries in the Middle East, such as Syria, face conflict and are struggling with the issues described in the source. By having this information in mind while discussing topics

surrounding the Middle East, it will provide a deeper insight. Not only does it highlight the cost of conflict, but also the cost-effectiveness of conflict prevention, the methods for achieving it, and how it can be done.

<https://story.internal-displacement.org/mena-2021/index.html>

Source C: This website, published by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), is an interactive storytelling source that provides information on the Arab Spring and its short- and long-term impacts, a key event in Middle East history, and how conflict has led to the displacement of large numbers of people. Referring to the 12.4 million individuals who were still considered internally displaced in 2019 due to conflict. It provides graphs, maps, and personal first-hand narratives to narrate the events.

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