

# INTERNATIONAL LAW AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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## REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 became the central problem of the Middle East region and the subject of global politics. Consequently, another conflict has emerged in the Middle East region, from which no solution is visible, where there is no single protagonist and both sides have the blame.

The research topic was selected by the author for two reasons. The first is that the researcher of international relations needs to study this conflict and analyze it from a professional point of view. The policies of the main players in global politics and possible changes in the trends of the political climate in the modern world depends on the solution to this problem. Second, the research topic is especially relevant for the author, as a citizen of Georgia, for whom one of the painful topics is the issue of the territorial integrity of Georgia.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict arose as a result of the conflict between different ethnic groups – Jews and Palestinian Arabs – over the ownership of the same territory (Mandatory Palestine). We think that the degree of intervention in the conflict needs to be activated by the Palestinian people and relatively balanced European actors: Belgium, Denmark, Sweden and Ireland. The purpose of the study is to discuss the interests, declarative diplomacy and approaches of the regional organizations, the EU and the League of Arab States in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Based on the author's purposes, widely used and proven methods in political science are used during the writing of the paper. Namely, comparative analysis, historical analysis, content analysis, and situational analysis.

As a result of the research, it was established that the independent efforts of regional organizations in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process did not yield results, and in the peace process, there is a need for the active involvement of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

**Keywords:** Israel; Palestine; international organizations; USA; European Union; United Nations; Hamas.

In general, in parallel with the current geopolitical situation, and in particular with the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, the century-old Israel-Palestine conflict remains an important problem in international relations, which has an impact on global politics. For decades, the process of settling the central problem of the region, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is characterized by a multitude of actors.

According to the article "Practical Diplomacy" by international law professor Sumaro Suryokusumo, diplomacy plays an important role in international relations in solving issues such as world peace<sup>1</sup>. Political scientist Jeff Berridge explains in his book "Diplomacy, Theory and Practice" that international organizations often address multilateral diplomacy to reach agreements on international issues<sup>2</sup>.

Israel-Palestine-EU relations have a long history. European states played a major role in the creation of the state of Israel and the start of the conflict. Historian Walter Zeev Laqueur in his book "A History of Zionism" defines political Zionism as "a product of Europe"<sup>3</sup>. According to the article "Borders, Power

<sup>1</sup> Suryokusumo, S. (2004). *Praktek Diplomasi*. Depok: Iblam, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Berridge, G. R., (2002). *Diplomacy, Theory and Practice*. London: Palgrave, 146.

<sup>3</sup> Laqueur, W. (2003). *A History of Zionism*. New York: Schocken Books, 592.

and Interdependence: A Borderlands Approach to Israel-Palestine and the European Union" by associate Professor of Middle Eastern Studies Raffaella A. Del Sarto, the beginning and development of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were caused by the ambivalent policies of the Great Britain and France, Nazi Germany and the Holocaust<sup>1</sup>.

With the establishment of the European Political Cooperation (EPC) in 1970, the European Community (EC) became actively involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which was continued by the European Union (EU) from 1993<sup>2</sup>. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has become a personal concern for the European community due to its economic interests in the region. A large part of Europe's energy security depends on the Middle East region, which is also a lucrative market for European consumer goods, services, products and weapons. Peace and stability are important for economic interests, which are hindered by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Conflict resolution has a long history, which begins back with the 1947 UN Partition Plan. In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the European Community's first official document of 1971 called parties for peace. It did not mention Palestine as a party to the conflict<sup>3</sup>. After the October war of 1973 and the oil crisis, the European Commission issued a new document calling for peace in the context of the "legitimate rights of the Palestinians"<sup>4</sup>. The Brussels Declaration of November 1973, the first official declaration of conflict within the framework of European political cooperation, demanded that Israel end its occupation of the Palestinian territories. The London Declaration of 1977 for the first time called for the inclusion of Palestinian representatives in future negotiations and the creation of a "homeland for the Palestinian people"<sup>5</sup>. In a 1977 document, the European Commission referred to the Palestinians as a people and noted that factors such as "homeland" and "national identity" should be taken into account during negotiations<sup>6</sup>.

The European Union has a position on the key issues of the peace process. The EU believes that the borders of the future Palestinian state should be based on the pre-1967 territories. It considers the Israeli settlements in the occupied territories of Palestine as illegal and a violation of the norms of international law, as well as an obstacle to the creation of two states. Supports the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of two states. Provides significant support to Palestinian refugees and considers it necessary to resolve this issue within the framework of international law. The European Union condemns all acts of violence. Recognizes Israel's right to defend its citizens against attack under international law<sup>7</sup>.

The European Union was the first to start trying to find a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. On June 13, 1980, the nine member states of the European Community adopted the Venice Declaration, which clearly established the European policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as the principles of the Middle East peace process. The document adopted by the European Community preceded the international principles and consensus on conflict resolution, which was adopted 13 years later<sup>8</sup>.

The Declaration of Venice consists of 11 important points. It is based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and requires that all states in the region have an equal right to exist in security, including Israel, and the second principle is justice for all peoples, which implies the recognition of the

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<sup>1</sup> Del Sarto, R. A. (2015). *Borders, Power and Interdependence: A Borderlands Approach to Israel-Palestine and the European Union*. Palgrave: Macmillan, 11

<[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279953719\\_Borders\\_Power\\_and\\_Interdependence\\_A\\_Borderlands\\_Approach\\_to\\_Israel-Palestine\\_and\\_the\\_European\\_Union](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279953719_Borders_Power_and_Interdependence_A_Borderlands_Approach_to_Israel-Palestine_and_the_European_Union)> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>2</sup> Peters, J. (2000). Europe and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process: The Declaration of the European Council of Berlin and Beyond" In: Behrendt, S., Hanelt, C.-P. (eds). *Bound to Cooperate Europe and the Middle-East*. Bertelsman: Gutersloh, 154.

<sup>3</sup> Secretariat of the Commission (1971). *Bulletin of the EC*, 6, 31 <<http://aei.pitt.edu/58646/1/BUL149.pdf>> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>4</sup> Secretariat of the Commission (1973). *Bulletin of the EC*, 10, 106 <<http://aei.pitt.edu/57094/1/BUL106.pdf>> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>5</sup> Peters, J. (2010). Europe and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process: the urgency of now. *European Security*, 19, 512.

<sup>6</sup> Secretariat of the Commission (1977). *Bulletin of the EC*, 6, 62 <<http://aei.pitt.edu/57738/1/BUL136.pdf>> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>7</sup> An official website of the European Union (2021). *Middle East Peace Process* <[https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/middle-east-peace-process\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/middle-east-peace-process_en)> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>8</sup> An official website of the European Union (1980). *Venice Declaration* <[https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/mepp/docs/venice\\_declaration\\_1980\\_en.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/mepp/docs/venice_declaration_1980_en.pdf)> (2022, June, 20).

legitimate rights of the Palestinians. According to the declaration, the issue of Palestine should be resolved through a peace process with the recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the involvement of the Palestine Liberation Organization<sup>1</sup>.

According to the 1999 Berlin and 2002 Seville declarations, the European Union considered only peace negotiations as a way to resolve the conflict. Called on Israel to end illegal settlements, and called on the participating states to resolve long-standing injustices in the Middle East through international efforts, taking into account the Palestinian people's right to self-determination<sup>2</sup>.

The second Palestinian uprising known as the Al-Aqsa Intifada, which began on September 28, 2000, led to the breakdown of all peace talks in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict<sup>3</sup>. To establish peace, the "Middle East Quartet" was created based on the UN Security Council Resolution No. 1397 of March 12, 2002, which reflected the need for effective mediation. The violence caused by the second intifada could only be stopped through intensive diplomatic efforts<sup>4</sup>.

The Quartet included two states – the United States of America and the Russian Federation, one universal international organization – the United Nations, and one regional organization – the European Union<sup>5</sup>. All four mediators had their interests. The Quartet allowed the European Union to adapt its goals and ideas to American foreign policy<sup>6</sup>. On June 24, 2002, the 43rd President of the United States of America, George Walker Bush, adopted the Bush Peace Plan, to establish peace in the Middle East<sup>7</sup>. This plan became the basis of the so-called road map of the Quartet's action principles, which was approved by the UN Security Council Resolution No. 529 of May 7, 2003<sup>8</sup>.

The road map included three phases, each phase was to be completed within a specified time and after three years the ultimate goal of establishing a Palestinian state would be reached: the first phase would include an end to violence, reform of Palestine, including security sector reform, freezing of illegal settlements, withdrawal of Israeli troops and Palestinian elections; the second phase – to create a Palestinian state with temporary borders; Third phase – Israeli-Palestinian negotiations<sup>9</sup>.

In the author's opinion, the Quartet would play the role of an effective mediator in the acute conflict in the Middle East if the interests of America were balanced. An example of the Quartet's ineffectiveness is the "unilateral disengagement plan" launched by Israel on August 15, 2005, which ended on September 23. The disengagement plan, within the framework of which 21 Jewish settlements were evacuated from the Gaza Strip and 4 from Samaria<sup>10</sup>. This decision on the part of Israel was an eye-wash for the international community, a strategic move as if Israel would follow the norms of international law. However, similar violations of the law continued in the territory of the West Bank. The decision made by Israel received support from the Bush administration.

Another factor that hindered the fulfilment of the requirements of the roadmap was the victory of Hamas, which was declared a terrorist organization by the European Union, in the 2006 elections

<sup>1</sup> Patokallio, P. (2004). European Union Policy on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: From Payer to Player? *Weatherhead Center of International Affairs at Harvard University*, 34-36.

<sup>2</sup> European Parliament (1999). *Berlin Declaration* <[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/ber2\\_en.htm#tableB](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/ber2_en.htm#tableB)> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>3</sup> Paljourneys (2021). *Over all chronology* <<https://www.paljourneys.org/en/timeline/overallchronology?sideid=6526>> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>4</sup> Whitfield, T. (2007). *Friends Indeed? The United Nations, Groups of Friends, and the Resolution of Conflict*. Washington, DC: United States Institute for Peace Press, 238.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations (2002). *Security Council demands immediate cessation of all violence in middle east; affirms vision of two states, Israel and Palestine* <<https://www.un.org/press/en/2002/sc7326.doc.htm>> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>6</sup> Mockli, D. (2010). The Middle East Conflict, Transatlantic Ties and the Quartet. In Bulut, E. (ed.) *European Involvement in the Arab-Israeli Conflict. Condesur-Noireau: EU Institute for Security Studies*, 67 <[https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/cp124-European\\_Involvement\\_in\\_the\\_Arab-Israeli\\_Conflict\\_1.pdf](https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/cp124-European_Involvement_in_the_Arab-Israeli_Conflict_1.pdf)> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>7</sup> Bush, G.W. (2002). "George W. Bush Administration: Speech Outlining the 'Bush Peace Plan'". *Jewish Virtual Library* <<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/bushplan.html#text>> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>8</sup> UN Documents (2003). *S/2003/529. Overview of Security Council Letters* <<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/ip-s-2003-529.php>> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>9</sup> Tocci, N. (2011). The EU, the Middle East Quartet and (In)effective Multilateralism. *Mercury E-paper*, 9( June), 9 <[http://mercury.uni-koeln.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/E-paper\\_no9\\_r2011.pdf](http://mercury.uni-koeln.de/fileadmin/user_upload/E-paper_no9_r2011.pdf)> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>10</sup> Malashkhia, Sh. (2011). *Conflict Anatomy*. Tbilisi: Form, 403.

in the Gaza Strip<sup>1 2</sup>. Due to the political circumstances in Israel and the Palestinian territories, the demands of the road map were never fully implemented by both sides, and its ultimate goal remained unattainable.

Studying the Middle East Quartet's annual 2002-2021 reports reveals its committed, unwavering and direct support for the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. The final status can be decided only as a result of bilateral negotiations. According to the representatives of the Quartet, trust between the parties and the support of the international community is necessary for successful negotiations. The Quartet affirms its full support for the Palestinian state-building process<sup>3</sup>.

An important fact is the meeting of representatives of the Quartet, Egypt and the League of Arab States in Cairo on July 1, 2015, where the Quartet recognized the importance of the Arab peace initiative in the process of a comprehensive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict<sup>4</sup>.

Borders and territory are crucial issues in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Since the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel has forcibly established borders with Palestine and occupied parts of its territory, which the European Union considers the "biggest obstacle to reform" that limits the progressive development of Palestine. The division of the West Bank reinforced the reality of Palestinian statelessness. International efforts have become necessary to reform the security sector, a major challenge in the Palestinian territories<sup>5</sup>.

The European Union has been actively involved in the security sector reform process in the Palestinian territory with its two missions. The European Union, one of the members of the Quartet, adopted a resolution on November 14, 2005, and on January 1, 2006, established a police mission in the Palestinian territories (later the EU Coordination Office for Palestinian Police Support) to maintain order in the Middle East region and settle the borders of the protracted and unresolved issue of the conflict.

The goal of the mission is to establish a sustainable and effective police system following international standards in the territories owned by Palestine. At the time of the establishment of the mission, the Palestinian police were far from the national police of an independent state<sup>6</sup>. Under the decision of the Political and Security Committee of June 28, 2022, the period from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023, was defined as the term of the mission<sup>7</sup>.

In September 2005, Israel signed a movement and access agreement with the Palestinian Authority following a unilateral disengagement plan<sup>8</sup>. Israel was relinquishing control of the Gaza Strip, and the Rafah border crossing was within the Palestinian Authority under third-party monitoring. It should be noted that Rafah is the only area from which it is possible to enter the Gaza Strip. The European Union made a politically relevant decision and took observer status to gain Israel's trust<sup>9</sup>. On November 30, 2005, the EU Border Assistance Mission in Rafah became operational. The mission initially had a twelve-month mandate<sup>10</sup>. The mission, which was temporarily suspended in 2007 after the capture of the Gaza Strip by

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<sup>1</sup> Eur-Lex (2021). *European Union established a list of persons, groups and entities involved in terrorist acts and subject to restrictive measures* <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L:2021:043:FULL&from=en>> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>2</sup> Hollis, R. (2011). "Europe and the Middle East: Has the EU Missed its Moment of Opportunity?" *Ortadoğu Etütleri 2* (2), 44 <[https://orsam.org.tr/d\\_hbanaliz/2Rosmary.pdf](https://orsam.org.tr/d_hbanaliz/2Rosmary.pdf)> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>3</sup> UNSCO (2015). *Middle East Quartet Reports* <<https://unsco.unmissions.org/mideast-quartet?page=1>> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>4</sup> UNSCO (2015). *Press Statement by the Middle East Quartet Envoys Cairo* <[https://unsco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/quartet\\_statement\\_1\\_july\\_2015.pdf](https://unsco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/quartet_statement_1_july_2015.pdf)> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>5</sup> Kristoff, M. (2012). *Policins in Palestine; Analyzing the EU Police Reform Mission in the West Bank*. *Journal SSR Issue Papers*, 7, 1 <[https://www.cigionlain.org/sites/default/files/ssr\\_issue\\_no7.pdf](https://www.cigionlain.org/sites/default/files/ssr_issue_no7.pdf)> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>6</sup> Lia, B., (2006). *A Police Force Without a State; A History of the Palestinian Security Forces in the West Bank*. Gaza: Publisher Ithaca Press, 269.

<sup>7</sup> Official Journal of the European Union (2022). *Political and security committee decision* <<https://eupolcops.eu/uploads/16578733292047274560.pdf>> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>8</sup> EUBAM Rafah (2006). *Agreement on Movement and Access (AMA)* <<https://www.eubam-rafah.eu/sites/default/files/u173/Agreement%20on%20Movement%20and%20Access.pdf>> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>9</sup> Del Sarto, R. (2007). *Wording and Meaning(s); EU-Israeli Political Cooperation According to the ENP Action Plan*. *Journal Mediterranean Politics*, 12 (1), 71.

<sup>10</sup> Eur-Lex (2005). *Council joint action 2005/889/CFSP on establishing a European Union Border Assistance Mission for the Rafah Crossing Point (EU BAM Rafah)* <<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2005:327:0028:0032:EN:PDF>> (2022, June, 20).

Hamas, was renewed in 2011 and its validity period was set to June 30, 2022<sup>1</sup>.

The Middle East is vital for Europe. Both its political initiatives and its economic cooperation with Israel and Palestine indicate the active participation of the European Union in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Cooperation with Israel and Arab countries, as close neighbours of Europe, has been developing for decades. More recent initiatives include the Mediterranean-Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) adopted at the Barcelona Conference in 1995. It is an economic union of the European Union and 16 countries on the southern coast of the Mediterranean Sea (including Israel and Palestine), which aims to protect the peace, stability, economic prosperity and democratic values<sup>2</sup>. The developments in the Middle East region led to the destabilization of the region and the reformation of the Mediterranean-Euro-Mediterranean partnership<sup>3</sup>.

In 2003, the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) was launched and developed during 2004. It aimed to avoid dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours (including non-member Israel and Palestine) and instead promote prosperity, stability and security for all<sup>4</sup>. This is based on democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights. European neighbourhood policy has replaced regionalism with bilateral relations<sup>5</sup>.

For the European Union, a two-state solution seems possible under the conditions of the creation of a strong Palestinian state. That is why the goal of the European neighbourhood policy is the institutional building of Palestine, democratic elections and its economic sustainability. The internal political situation in Palestine, the separation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as well as the clashes between Hamas and Israel, have influenced the construction of the Palestinian state. However, the European Union actively supports the two-state solution, and to achieve this goal it actively cooperates with Palestine and is its largest donor.

An important document is the European Neighborhood Policy Instrument report for 2014-2020, according to which in 2016 the EU invested 218.5 million euros in support of democracy, human rights and values, the rule of law and an independent judiciary in Palestine. The EU has three areas of focus: support for local self-government, support for the private sector and economic development, and water and land use development. In 2016, the European Union allocated 10 million euros for each of them. The European Union is also the largest contributor to the UNRWA agency, contributing €82 million in 2016 to aid Palestinian refugees<sup>6</sup>.

The European Neighborhood Policy Supervisory Body is a monitoring group that evaluates and makes recommendations on each partner. An important document for analyzing economic policy is the 2020 report of the monitoring group within the results-oriented framework, which covers the period from 2017 to 2021. According to this document, the main challenges of 2020/2021 in Palestine remain effective, transparent and accountable public administration, democratic government, private sector, and the relationship between the state and the citizen<sup>7</sup>.

On March 22, 1945, the Arab League Charter was signed and the League of Arab States was formed, which supported the de-occupation of the Palestinian territories and participated in the 1967 and 1973 wars against Israel. At the beginning of the 21st century, the political agenda of the Arab countries changed and they began to actively participate in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. I think this was caused by their realization of the main problem, namely, the presence of a theocratic, future nuclear-armed Iran.

The Arab League Summit on March 27-28, 2002 in Beirut adopted the political document –

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<sup>1</sup> EUBAM Rafah (2006). *About Us* <<https://www.eubam-rafah.eu/en/node/5048>> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>2</sup> Del Sarto, R. A., Schumacher, T. (2005). From EMP to ENP: What's at Stake with the European Neighbourhood Policy towards the Southern Mediterranean? *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 10, 18-19.

<sup>3</sup> Schumacher, T., (2004). "Riding on the Winds of Change: The Future of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership". *The International Spectator*, 2, 89-103.

<sup>4</sup> An official website of the European Union (2015). *European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations* <[https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/european-neighbourhood-policy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/european-neighbourhood-policy_en)> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>5</sup> Aliboni, R. (2003). *The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Regional and Transatlantic Challenges, Opinions Working Paper, Center for Transatlantic Relations*. SAIS Johns Hopkins University, 8.

<sup>6</sup> Jaya, J., Ooij Van, J. (2018). Palestine: A Unique Case? *European Policy Review*, 2 (1), 97.

<sup>7</sup> An official website of the European Union (2022). *Result Oriented Framework of the European Joint Strategy in Support of Palestine 2017-2020* <[https://www.eas.europa.eu/delegations/palestine-occupied-palestinian-territory-west-bank-and-gaza-strip/result-oriented\\_en?s=206](https://www.eas.europa.eu/delegations/palestine-occupied-palestinian-territory-west-bank-and-gaza-strip/result-oriented_en?s=206)> (2022, June, 20).

Arab Peace Initiative<sup>1</sup>. According to the document, the two-state solution had to be carried out within the pre-1967 borders, and East Jerusalem would be the capital of the Palestinian state. As for the Palestinian refugees, their issue would be resolved based on UN Resolution 194. If the mentioned conditions were met, the Arab countries would establish diplomatic relations with Israel.

The peace initiative gained international support. The UN Security Council Resolution No. 1435 of 2002 called on Israel, Palestine and all the countries of the region to recognize the initiative of the Arab countries<sup>2</sup>. The convincing victory of Hamas, recognized as a terrorist organization, in the 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council elections led to a political conflict between the ruling Palestinian party Fatah and Hamas in the Gaza Strip and brought all peace talks to a deadlock<sup>3</sup>.

The League of Arab States played an important role in renewing the peace process. With the initiative of Saudi Arabia, on February 8, 2007, the Mecca Agreement was signed between Hamas and Fatah, based on which a unified Palestinian government was to be created<sup>4</sup>. The Makkah Agreement, like other agreements in the peace process, proved ineffective due to non-compliance with the principles of the Quartet from the Hamas side. The West boycotted the Palestinian Authority, stopped banking operations in Palestine and suspended peace talks<sup>5</sup>. On March 29, 2007, the Arab Quartet organized the Riyadh summit, the aim of which was to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict peacefully, taking into account the "Land for Peace" formula and through negotiations between the parties<sup>6</sup>.

In June 2007, due to another confrontation between Hamas and Fatah and the establishment of full control of the Gaza Strip by Hamas, the peace process reached a deadlock again. Independent efforts of regional organizations in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process did not yield results. With the efforts of the United States of America, on November 26-27, 2007, an international conference on the Middle East was held in Annapolis, which had full international support. After studying the Annapolis conference, it can be said that only international support is not enough in the peace process and cooperation between the parties is necessary as well. The conference failed due to Israel's operation against Hamas in late December 2008 and the start of new illegal constructions in East Jerusalem.

The Hamas factor had a great impact on the peace process. It can be said that the peace process initiated by the League of Arab States did not yield results. The Arab peace initiative meant the destruction of the state of Israel. As for the Mecca agreement and the Riyadh summit based on it, Israel would never allow negotiations with the internationally recognized terrorist organization Hamas.

In 2020, to prevent the construction of additional illegal settlements on the West Bank by Israel, a peace agreement was signed between four Arab countries and Israel, which is an important step towards the normalization of relations. Despite the Arab peace initiative of 2002, which excluded any kind of recognition of Israel by the Arab countries until its withdrawal from the pre-1967 territories. I could not evaluate the 2020 peace agreement as a rejection of the Arab peace initiative. Because this was one of the ways out of the crisis. The normalization of Israel's relations with the Arab world is a precursor to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

The ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine continues to be an acute issue of international relations, to which the efforts of international and regional organizations are directed. Due to a century of conflict, peace and stability in the Middle East region are always in question. Europe is an active supporter of the creation of a Palestinian state. Its position depends on the observance of the principles of

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<sup>1</sup> European Parliament (1967). *The Arab Peace Initiative* <[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009\\_2014/documents/empa/dv/1\\_arab-initiative-beirut/\\_1\\_arab-initiative-beirut\\_en.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/empa/dv/1_arab-initiative-beirut/_1_arab-initiative-beirut_en.pdf)> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>2</sup> Security Council Report (2002). *UN Security Council Resolution 1435* <<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/ip-sres-1435.php>> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>3</sup> Podeh, E. (2014). Israel and the Arab Peace Initiative, 2002–2014: A Plausible Missed Opportunity. *The Middle East Journal*, 68(4), 592 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/43698184>> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>4</sup> Kostiner, J., Mueller, Ch. (2010). Egyptian and Saudi Intervention in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (2006-09). *Local Powers' Mediation Compared*, In Uzi Rabi (ed) *International Intervention in Local Conflicts: Crisis Management and Conflict Resolution since the Cold War*, Publisher Tauris Academic Studies, 207-208. <[https://www.academia.edu/639551/Egyptian\\_and\\_Saudi\\_Intervention\\_in\\_the\\_Israeli\\_Palestinian\\_Conflict\\_2006\\_09\\_Local\\_Powers\\_Mediation\\_Compared](https://www.academia.edu/639551/Egyptian_and_Saudi_Intervention_in_the_Israeli_Palestinian_Conflict_2006_09_Local_Powers_Mediation_Compared)> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>5</sup> GovTrack (2006). *H.R. 4681 (109th): Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act* <<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/109/hr4681/text>> (2022, June, 20).

<sup>6</sup> United Nations (2007). *Riyadh Declaration* <<https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-209109/>> (2022, June, 20).

international law and human rights, the occupation of Israel, annexed East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights is contrary to these principles.

As a result of studying the declarations of the European Commission and the European Union, it can be said that the main interest of Europe and the main reason for its involvement in the settlement of the Israel-Palestine conflict is its economic interest in the region. The desire and effort of the European Union are to actively participate in the creation of the Palestinian state through declarative diplomacy and economic policy. The participation of two missions in the process of reforming the security sector is the basis for building an independent Palestinian state. It is the solution of two states that will end the conflict and establish peace in the region. However, the main challenge is peace and security in the region. Also, the lack of consensus among EU members hinders its foreign policy. Each country will always have its priorities and challenges.

The goal of the League of Arab States, like the European Union, is to create an independent state of Palestine. The implementation of the agreements reached by the League of Arab States in the peace process was hindered by the internal political situation in Palestine and Hamas, recognized as a terrorist organization. In 2020, the Arab states replaced the ineffective declarative diplomacy that has been going on for years by establishing direct diplomatic relations with Israel. I believe that the mentioned diplomatic connection is not a disregard for the principles of the Arab peace initiative, but solid bilateral cooperation to start a new round of negotiations and finally reach a consensus on the main issues of the conflict.

Finally, it must be said that the formats of involvement of the European Union and the League of Arab States in the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will not be sufficient for the peace process. Instead of a trilateral format, it is necessary to work together with regional organizations and parties to the conflict, the desire of the Palestinian people, the struggle for the liberation of the Gaza Strip from Hamas, and the full support of Israel for the creation of a Palestinian state, which will become a guarantee of its security.

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