

The United Nations Agencies and the Axis of Evil

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Abstract

This study critically examines the role of United Nations (UN) agencies in conflicts involving Israel and Iran-backed actors, particularly the alleged institutional bias that influences perceptions and responses to Israel's security policies. This research investigates three main objectives: assessing the neutrality of UN evaluations, analyzing the impact of biased portrayals on Israel's conflict resolution efforts, and examining Iran's strategies for leveraging multilateral institutions for geopolitical gains. Utilizing realism and securitization theory, the study explores how Israel's security measures are perceived internationally and the implications for regional stability. Methodologically, qualitative case studies and content analysis of UN resolutions, official statements, and reports are used to provide historical and political context. The findings suggest that addressing institutional impartiality could strengthen the UN's credibility as a mediator in the Middle East conflict, fostering a more constructive environment for regional peace and security. Key recommendations include establishing neutral monitoring bodies within the UN, enhancing balanced reporting, and implementing safeguards against coalition biases.

Key Words: *United Nations, Axis of Evil, Neutrality, Aggressor, Geopolitical Advantage*

1.0 Introduction

The global community remains sharply divided on the issue of Israel's security and its responses to attacks from Iran and its proxies, such as Hezbollah, Houthis, Hamas etc. A critical area of this divide centers around the role of United Nations (UN) agencies in handling conflicts involving Israel, with allegations that these agencies often favor narratives that condemn Israel while overlooking the provocations and deceptive manipulation of information from adversarial actors. Scholars and policymakers have described this trend as part of a broader geopolitical framework often labeled the "Axis of Evil," which includes Iran, Syria, and other hostile non-state actors aligned against Western interests and regional stability (Kfir, 2020; Parsi, 2012). This study examines the UN's response to Israel's security operations within the context of Iran-backed attacks.

Historically, the UN has been criticized for a disproportionate focus on Israel, with reports showing that a significant number of resolutions passed by agencies such as the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) target Israel (Bayefsky, 2014). Iran and its proxies, known for sponsoring terrorism and destabilizing regional peace, often receive less scrutiny under the same international mechanisms (Erdman, 2022). This selective accountability raises questions about the political dynamics within the UN, the effectiveness of its agencies in addressing conflicts impartially, and the broader implications for global security frameworks.

While some scholars explore the political motives behind UN resolutions, there is limited empirical analysis on how these decisions affect Israel's strategic security policies and regional stability (Stein, 2021). Moreover, most existing studies focus on Israel's military operations without adequately exploring the impact of biased international pressure on her right to self-defense. Additionally, a knowledge gap exists regarding how Iran leverages this perceived bias to advance its regional agenda under the guise of resistance movements, as well as the role of proxy militias in undermining peace efforts.

This study aims to address these gaps by investigating:

1. The consistency and neutrality of UN agencies in evaluating conflicts involving Israel and Iran's proxies.
2. How the portrayal of Israel as an aggressor in international forums influences conflict resolution efforts.
3. The strategies employed by Iran to manipulate multilateral institutions for geopolitical advantage.

The study assumes that these dynamics have significant implications for both the legitimacy of the UN and regional security. One of the key assumptions is that the international community's selective condemnation of Israel undermines peace negotiations by emboldening non-state actors aligned with Iran. Another assumption is that institutional bias within the UN may contribute to Israel's pursuit of unilateral security measures, further complicating diplomatic solutions.

1.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts realism as the primary theoretical framework, which emphasizes state behavior driven by self-interest, security concerns, and power dynamics (Morgenthau, 1948). Realism is particularly relevant in understanding Israel's responses to perceived existential threats and the strategic maneuvers of Iran and its proxies within a hostile regional environment. In addition, the concept of securitization theory will be applied to analyze how Israel frames its military actions as necessary security measures, in contrast to the UN's framing of these actions as violations of international law (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998).

Methodologically, the study will employ a qualitative research design using case studies and content analysis. Data will be gathered from sources such as UN resolutions, official Israeli and Iranian statements, and reports from human rights organizations. In addition, secondary sources like peer-reviewed journal articles and books will provide historical and political context for the analysis. Triangulation of these sources will ensure a comprehensive evaluation of both historical patterns and contemporary developments in the Israel-Iran conflict.

1.2. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION OF THE UN AND THE AXIS OF EVIL

1.2.1 THE UNITED NATIONS (UN)

The United Nations (UN) is an international organization founded in 1945 with the primary aim of promoting peace, security, human rights, and international cooperation (UN Charter, 1945). Comprising multiple specialized agencies such as the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), and the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), the UN plays a central role in conflict resolution, humanitarian aid, and monitoring human rights violations globally.

From the perspective of Luck, E. C. (2006). "The United Nations is a multilateral intergovernmental organization established to promote international peace and security, foster friendly relations among nations, and serve as a forum for harmonizing the actions of states in

pursuit of common goals.” On the other hand, Claude, I. L. (1962). sees it as “the institutionalization of international cooperation, a central mechanism through which states attempt to organize and regulate their political and economic interactions and maintain international order.”

While Weiss, T. G. (2009). View the United Nations as “both an arena and an actor: it is the meeting ground for member states but also an entity with its own initiatives, norms, and bureaucratic influence, aiming to advance human rights, development, and peacekeeping.”

From the perspectives of this study the United Nations is a supposedly unbiased institutional framework and forum of cooperation, conflict mediation/resolution, promotion of human rights and cultural exchange. But reality suggests that the UN has become a center for advancement of the interest of nations. On the one hand, the Super Powers through the United Nations Security Council veto always proposals that are seen not to be in their interest; on the other hand, the developing nations use the UN General Assembly’s Resolutions votes to advance their own interest against perceived foes.

Consequently, the organization has often been criticized for inconsistencies in enforcing its principles, especially in politically contentious cases like the Israel-Palestine conflict (Bayefsky, 2014). Scholars argue that the influence of geopolitical interests within these agencies often undermines their impartiality, resulting in what is perceived as an anti-Israel bias in UN resolutions (Kfir, 2020).

Additionally, certain UN bodies have been accused of disproportionately focusing on Israel’s security policies while downplaying or ignoring the actions of Iran and its regional allies (Stein, 2021). This has raised questions about the UN’s neutrality, particularly in the context of conflicts involving state actors defending themselves against asymmetrical threats posed by non-state actors aligned with Iran (Erdman, 2022). From the point of view of this article, the United Nations with all intents and purposes should be an unbiased institutional device or mechanism that serve the interest of all.

1.2.2. THE AXIS OF EVIL

The term “Axis of Evil” was popularized by U.S. President George W. Bush in 2002, referring to Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as states sponsoring terrorism and pursuing weapons of mass destruction (Bush, 2002). This concept has since evolved to describe a broader network of state and non-state actors working against Western interests and regional stability, particularly in the Middle East. Within this framework, Iran plays a leading role, using proxies like Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Gaza, and the Houthis in Yemen to expand its influence and confront Israel and its allies (Parsi, 2012).

The term “Axis of Evil” not only captures the actions of these states but also highlights the ideological alignment of anti-Western and anti-Israel sentiments that drive their policies (Litvak, 2020). These actors strategically exploit regional instability and international forums, such as the UN, to delegitimize Israel’s security measures and strengthen their geopolitical agendas (Erdman, 2022). Iran’s involvement with these proxies is often framed as part of a “resistance” movement, positioning itself as a defender of Muslim interests and Palestinian sovereignty (Kfir, 2020).

This study considers the “Axis of Evil” as a conceptual lens to understand how Iran and its allies leverage asymmetrical warfare and political influence within international institutions like the UN to isolate Israel diplomatically. It explores the nexus between Iran’s strategic ambitions, its proxy networks, and the political dynamics within the UN that shape responses to conflicts involving Israel.

The conceptual clarification of the UN and the Axis of Evil provides a critical foundation for this study by situating the analysis within the framework of international politics and regional security. Understanding the UN's role in mediating conflicts and the strategic use of proxies by Iran highlights the complex interplay between diplomacy, geopolitics, and security in the Middle East. This context is essential for exploring the central objectives of the study: to assess the neutrality of UN agencies, examine the influence of political bias, and understand how these dynamics impact peace efforts and Israel's security strategies.

2.0 THE CONSISTENCY AND NEUTRALITY OF UN AGENCIES

On one hand, supporters of the UN argue that any focus on Israel may reflect the agency's mandate to address human rights violations and protect civilian populations in occupied territories. According to Lynk (2020), UN experts have stated that Israel's long-term control over Palestinian territories, which the UN deems an occupation, places it under heightened scrutiny due to international humanitarian law obligations. Lynk argues that UN agencies aim to prioritize the protection of civilians, and therefore any perceptions of bias are rooted in a mandate rather than favoritism.

However, the above defense ignores the fact that most of the terrorist infrastructures in these territories were built in civilian areas. For instance, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and intelligence sources have reported that Hamas uses civilian infrastructure, including Al-Shifa Hospital, as command centers, with tunnels hidden beneath to move personnel and equipment while avoiding airstrikes. In addition to hospitals, Hamas also utilizes schools, mosques, and other sites as military storage, using them to monitor Israeli movements and relay intelligence. This tactic of operating within civilian areas complicates military responses and violates international laws designed to protect civilians (Berman, 2017; Koren, 2020). Human Rights Watch (2021) and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2023) have condemned Hamas's militarization of civilian structures, arguing it puts civilians at greater risk and hinders humanitarian aid. Irrespective of these verbal condemnations such action by Hamas has not attracted multilateral resolutions that carry weight of sanctions that can deter such non state actors against such actions.

Moreover, some scholars argue that inherent structural challenges limit the UN's ability to maintain consistent neutrality. Smith (2022) suggests that competing interests of UNSC permanent members, particularly in the context of Middle Eastern alliances, often lead to vetoes or compromises that prevent clear condemnation of certain actions, especially those involving Iranian proxies. Such geopolitical tensions can hinder UN agencies' capacity to impartially evaluate and respond to conflicts in the region. Nevertheless, the UN and her agencies must find a way to assert itself to be relevant in its role as unbiased umpire.

On the other hand, the consistency and neutrality of United Nations (UN) agencies in evaluating conflicts involving Israel and Iran's proxies has often been a topic of contention. Observers, states, and analysts have critiqued UN bodies, such as the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) over perceived biases and inconsistencies in handling issues related to these conflicts. The study will explore the criticisms and defenses surrounding UN agencies' neutrality and consistency.

First of all, critics argue that the UN, particularly the UNHRC, exhibits a disproportionate focus on Israel, often while underemphasizing or not directly addressing similar activities by Iran's proxies, such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza. For instance, The UN has issued a notably higher number of resolutions condemning Israel compared to those against Iran and its

allied groups, such as Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis. Since 2015, over 140 UNGA resolutions have condemned Israel, while fewer resolutions target Iran, North Korea, and other critical areas combined. Similarly, the UNHRC has issued more condemnations against Israel than all other countries together. Critics argue this imbalance raises concerns about UN impartiality, potentially overshadowing global human rights issues involving Iran and its proxies. Such perceived bias could weaken the UN's credibility as an impartial umpire and may indirectly enable destabilizing actions by state and non-state actors in the region.

On Nov. 3, 2024 Fox News reported that “the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), which oversees the humanitarian-civil effort in Gaza, reported that during its attempts to evacuate patients and staff from Kamal Adwan and Al-Awda hospitals in northern Gaza, terrorists “detonated an explosive device only a few meters away from the Kamal Adwan hospital.” While the convoy was spared injuries, COGAT reported that six children in the hospital were injured.” The question is why should Hamas detonate explosive that could harm the same people they claimed to be fighting for? The only answer to that is to deceive the international community to labelling Israel as the aggressor.

Besides, The New York Time of 9th. December 2024 reported that “Israel warned of Hamas presence in UN schools”. The New York Times noted as follows:-

The records bear similarities with other Hamas records that The Times has examined, and the names and identification numbers listed match those in a separate UNRWA database. The information was shared at The Times's request, and the Israeli government did not choose to share the materials with the agency itself, a U.N. official said.”

The above has prompted the United States, among other Western nations to criticized this perceived imbalance. Former U.S. Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley has argued that the UNHRC has an “obsession with Israel,” noting that Israel is often singled out through a unique Agenda Item 7, which requires that its actions be addressed in every council session, a standard not applied to other states.

Additionally, in an academic analysis, Bayefsky (2009) highlighted that UN resolutions addressing Israel's actions often receive swift consensus, while resolutions concerning Hezbollah's and Hamas's actions either lack similar urgency or are watered down. According to Bayefsky, this inconsistency can undermine the perceived neutrality of UN bodies and cast doubt on the effectiveness of their conflict evaluations.

Second, research by authors such as Steinberg (2019) has also suggested that UN agencies sometimes employ selective language that may contribute to perceptions of bias. For instance, UNSC statements on Israeli operations are often termed as “violations” or “aggressions,” while similar actions by Iran-backed groups may be referred to more neutrally as “responses” or omitted from specific condemnations altogether. This difference in language has shaped public perceptions and influence the global narrative around these conflicts. Promoting the global public opinion to be disproportionally against the state of Israel. Thereby giving vent to the activities of terrorist groups in the region.

In short, the consistency and neutrality of UN agencies in evaluating conflicts involving Israel and Iran's proxies is a complex issue, shaped by mandates, geopolitical interests, and institutional frameworks. While critics highlight what they view as a disproportionate focus on Israel, defenders argue that this focus is rooted in legal obligations and mandates to protect civilian populations. Ultimately, the challenge of achieving perceived neutrality in these evaluations reflects the broader complexity of Middle Eastern geopolitics and the operational limitations faced by UN agencies.

But it is incumbent upon the UN system to assert itself if it must be relevant in the quest to maintain global peace and security.

3.0 PORTRAYAL OF ISRAEL AS THE AGGRESSOR AT INTERNATIONAL FORA AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

The portrayal of Israel as an aggressor in international forums, such as the United Nations (UN) and other diplomatic platforms, profoundly influences Middle Eastern conflict resolution efforts and indirectly impacts the actions of Iran and its allies, like Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza. This narrative often leads to complexities in peace-building and has, emboldened Iranian-backed proxies to persist in hostilities, complicating broader regional stability.

First, in international forums like the UN General Assembly and the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), Israel is frequently depicted as an aggressor. Many resolutions criticize Israeli policies, especially in relation to the “Palestinian territories”, and focus on issues like settlements in the West Bank, military actions in Gaza, and the treatment of Palestinian populations. Between 2006 and 2020, Israel was the subject of over 90 UNHRC resolutions, whereas other Middle Eastern countries received considerably fewer (UNHRC, 2020). This disproportionate focus has led some analysts to argue that the UN’s emphasis on Israel over other regional actors reinforces a narrative of Israel as the primary aggressor, even when conflicts involve mutual hostilities (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2020). This has contributed to international skepticism about Israeli security concerns and can create barriers to fair mediation.

Second, the portrayal of Israel as an aggressor has significant implications for peace processes and conflict resolution efforts. The international pressure and censure directed disproportionately at Israel can limit the leverage that mediators, such as the United States or the European Union, have in peace negotiations. For example, after Israel’s Operation Protective Edge in 2014, the UN issued a report strongly criticizing Israel’s military response to the rocket attacks from Hamas (United Nations, 2015). Critics of this portrayal argue that it ignores provocations from Iranian-backed groups and has unintentionally legitimize the continued aggression of these groups against Israel, framing it as “resistance” rather than provocation.

Additionally, international forums tend to place less emphasis on holding non-state actors, such as Hamas, accountable. Hamas, often regarded as an Iranian proxy by Israeli officials, continues to carry out operations in Gaza. This lack of balanced scrutiny complicates efforts by international bodies to negotiate fair ceasefires or peace settlements, as it shifts accountability away from groups that play significant roles in sustaining the conflict (International Crisis Group, 2021). Such disparities in treatment hinder balanced conflict resolution that considers the security concerns of all involved.

Third, the depiction of Israel as an aggressor has strategic implications for Iran’s influence in the region. Iran has consistently framed itself as a defender of Palestinian rights and has provided ideological and material support to groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza. The portrayal of Israel as an aggressor in international forums supports Iran’s narrative, strengthening its justification for backing these militias, who claim to resist Israeli actions (Levitt, 2013).

An example of this dynamic is evident in the 2006 Lebanon War, where Hezbollah positioned its attacks as resistance against an “occupying” and “aggressive” Israel; and the ongoing war between Hamas, Hezbollah, Houthis and Iran, wherein Iran is not only providing military support for these groups but launching attack against Israel by itself. This stance garnering significant sympathy, both regionally and internationally, which in turn justified Iran’s continued support. Counter-terrorism expert Matthew Levitt argues that Iran’s backing of Hezbollah grew because Hezbollah

was perceived as a protector against Israeli aggression. This perspective aligned with Iran's broader regional goal of expanding its influence and countering Western presence in the Middle East (Levitt, 2013).

Fourth, this portrayal of Israel as an aggressor also influences Western and regional policy decisions. For example, the European Union has faced internal debates over whether to classify Hezbollah entirely as a terrorist organization, with some member states resisting this designation due to Hezbollah's image as a "resistance" force against Israeli actions (European Council, 2021). This hesitancy has, emboldened Hezbollah, enabling it to continue militant activities and heightening tensions along Israel's northern borders.

Iran's support for Hamas in Gaza has similarly strengthened Hamas's capacity to launch rockets into Israeli territories. During escalations, such as the 2021 and the ongoing Israel-Gaza conflict, international forums and media sometimes present the conflict as one-sided, focusing on Israeli military actions rather than the initial provocations. For instance Ireland has become the latest European nation to say it will intervene in the genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice. This approach inadvertently justifies Iran's continued support for Hamas and other groups as "defenders" against Israel's "oppression" of Palestinians (International Crisis Group, 2021). This narrative weakens international efforts to hold Iran accountable for destabilizing actions across the region.

Put simply, portraying Israel as an aggressor in international forums carries complex implications for regional dynamics. This portrayal not only emboldens Iranian proxies but also complicates conflict resolution efforts and undermines balanced mediation. For meaningful progress toward peace, international bodies must pursue a more refined approach that holds all parties accountable, mitigating incentives for further aggression and paving the way for more stable peace-building initiatives.

4.0 IRANIAN MANIPULATIVE STRATEGIES ON MULTILATERAL INSTITUTION AGAINST ISRAEL

Iran has employed several strategies to influence multilateral institutions and leverage them for its geopolitical goals, often navigating complex diplomatic landscapes and forming alliances to promote its interests. These strategies include:

4.1. Coalition Building and Alliances

Iran has worked to align itself with countries that have mutual interests, particularly within the United Nations. By forming coalitions with non-aligned and developing countries, especially through platforms like the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Iran has strengthened its political standing and leveraged support against sanctions and resolutions that target its policies. According to Tabatabai (2019), Iran strategically collaborates with countries opposing Western policies to create a bloc that can oppose resolutions in bodies like the UN Security Council and General Assembly. This coalition-building helps Iran prevent sanctions or dilute the impact of international actions against it (Tabatabai, 2019).

4.2. Use of Legal and Diplomatic Maneuvers

Iran has frequently utilized legal arguments and diplomatic channels to challenge the imposition of sanctions or restrictions, presenting itself as a defender of national sovereignty and opposing external interference. For instance, at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), Iran has brought cases against the United States, arguing that sanctions violate treaties or agreements such as the

1955 Treaty of Amity. Through such legal avenues, Iran attempts to undermine unilateral sanctions and pressures exerted by Western nations (Landler & Gladstone, 2018).

4.3. Regional Organizations as Platforms

Iran actively participates in regional organizations, such as the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and uses them as platforms to counterbalance Western influence. Its role in these institutions allows it to promote economic and security policies that support its regional influence while advocating against foreign intervention in the Middle East. This approach helps Iran build economic resilience against sanctions by fostering trade with neighboring countries and advancing projects like transportation and energy infrastructure within the region (Ehteshami & Zweiri, 2012).

4.4. Advocacy for “Axis of Resistance”

Through multilateral bodies, Iran supports the “Axis of Resistance,” a political and ideological alliance involving Syria, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Shiite militias across the region. This alliance is a key component of Iran's influence strategy in the Middle East, and Tehran frequently frames it as part of a broader resistance against Western and Israeli actions. Iran's support for this axis is often framed within multilateral institutions as legitimate defense or support for oppressed peoples, seeking to legitimize its alliances and increase its geopolitical influence in the Arab world (Wehrey, 2018).

4.5. Economic and Humanitarian Diplomacy

Iran also engages in economic diplomacy and humanitarian initiatives to cultivate goodwill and present itself as a constructive international player. Through initiatives aimed at providing aid and building infrastructure in developing countries, Iran attempts to gain support within international organizations. For example, Iran has been active in providing technical and humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan and Iraq, presenting itself as a stabilizing force in the region. This soft-power approach has allowed it to gain favor with countries that can support its initiatives in multilateral platforms (Esfandiary & Tabatabai, 2015).

4.6. Counter-Sanctions Discourse and Sanctions Circumvention

Iran frequently uses multilateral forums to criticize sanctions, presenting them as violations of international law and economic warfare that harm civilian populations. By appealing to humanitarian principles, Iran seeks to gain sympathy and support from countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia that may also be opposed to Western sanctions policies. This approach is evident in Iran's speeches at the UN and other international platforms, where it argues against the unfair impact of sanctions on healthcare and essential goods, which it argues breaches the rights of the Iranian people (Katzman, 2020).

Iran's involvement with UN agencies and its influence on regional decision-making can indirectly contribute to outcomes that support its interests, occasionally aligning with positions that run counter to those of Israel. Here are key ways this occurs, particularly in contexts involving Iran's alignment with groups or policies opposing Israeli actions:

In the first place, Iran's cooperation with UN agencies, particularly with the UNHCR, WHO, and UNDP, provides it with a platform to frame itself as a regional humanitarian leader while indirectly promoting narratives that challenge Western and Israeli perspectives. For instance, Iran's active support for Palestinian refugees has allowed it to align with pro-Palestinian sentiments within the

United Nations and the broader international community, a stance that aligns with the interests of groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah. Through its cooperation with UNHCR on refugee issues and its advocacy against sanctions that affect civilians, Iran strengthens its position as a supporter of “oppressed peoples,” a narrative that resonates among many countries in the Non-Aligned Movement (Katzman, 2020; Ehteshami & Zweiri, 2012).

Second, Iran has consistently lobbied against economic sanctions, especially through UN channels. This has resulted in a recurring narrative within the UN system advocating for humanitarian exemptions in sanction regimes—a stance that often garners sympathy from countries concerned about civilian impacts, including sanctions impacting Gaza. Iran’s position here indirectly strengthens a broader discourse within the UN that critiques sanctions on humanitarian grounds, creating an environment that can work against Israel when similar sanction debates arise (Wehrey, 2018). By emphasizing the civilian costs of sanctions, Iran frames itself as an advocate for human rights, which sometimes extends diplomatic cover to its allies.

Third, Iran’s influence on voting blocs, such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), enables it to rally support for resolutions condemning Israeli policies in forums like the UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council. This coalition-building has led to resolutions critical of Israeli actions in Palestinian territories, especially in instances where Iran and its allies underscore Israel’s human rights record in the context of Gaza and Palestinian territories. According to Tabatabai (2019), this coordination with nations in the Global South and the Islamic world allows Iran to exert collective pressure that challenges Israeli policies, often creating a UN atmosphere that appears unfavorable to Israel.

Fourth, Iran’s backing of the so-called “Axis of Resistance”—comprising allies like Syria, Hezbollah, and certain Palestinian factions—is reflected in its multilateral engagement, where it presents this alignment as part of legitimate defense and opposition to Israeli and Western intervention. This advocacy can sway votes in international forums toward a more favorable stance on groups opposing Israel. For example, within the UN, there is a tendency to pass resolutions supporting Palestinian statehood and condemning settlements, positions often favored by countries in Iran’s sphere of influence (Esfandiary & Tabatabai, 2015; UNGA Resolutions, 2019-2023).

Fifth, by focusing on sovereignty, self-defense, and resistance to foreign intervention, Iran has successfully projected itself as a champion of sovereign rights within the UN. This narrative resonates in debates where Israel’s policies in Palestinian territories are questioned under international law. Iran’s contribution to discussions around sovereignty and anti-colonialism strengthens sentiments within the UN that often lead to criticisms of Israeli policies as occupying forces, indirectly favoring Iran’s ideological and strategic stance against Israel (Ehteshami & Zweiri, 2012).

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the United Nations faces critical challenges in addressing the Israel-Iran conflict with consistency and impartiality. Persistent perceptions of bias undermine the UN’s credibility and, by extension, the legitimacy of its resolutions. Iran’s engagement with UN agencies and multilateral coalitions allows it to subtly influence decisions that can lead to outcomes favorable to its position and that of its proxies, often in contrast to Israel’s interests.

5.2. RECOMMEDATIONS

To address the challenges associated with UN agencies' handling of conflicts involving Israel and Iran's allies, here are recommendations tailored to each objective of the study:

Enhancing Consistency and Neutrality on UN Agencies in Conflict Resolution.

Strengthen Mandate for Neutral Observers: The UN should consider establishing a dedicated, independent body within the Human Rights Council to monitor and report on conflicts in a manner that is unbiased and consistent across all parties. By doing so, the UN would provide more balanced reporting, enhancing its legitimacy and ensuring that neither Israel nor Iran's proxies are unjustly portrayed (Weiss, 2020).

Create Standardized Evaluation Frameworks: The UN can develop clear, consistent guidelines for evaluating conflicts, applying them uniformly to both Israel and Iranian-backed groups. This approach would reduce perceptions of bias, allowing for fair assessment regardless of the political dynamics involved. For instance, a standardized framework could assess human rights conditions on both sides of a conflict using the same criteria (Mills, 2021).

Enhance Representation in Fact-Finding Missions: Including diverse and neutral member states in UN investigative bodies could prevent any single country or bloc from influencing reports disproportionately. Ensuring fair representation would improve objectivity and reduce claims of bias (Bennis, 2020).

Addressing the Impact of Israel's Portrayal as an Aggressor on Conflict Resolution

Encourage Inclusive Narrative Practices: The UN should facilitate balanced discussions that highlight the complexities of both Israeli and Iranian-backed actors' roles in conflicts. Educational sessions or panels that consider the historical, security, and humanitarian perspectives on both sides could reduce polarizing narratives and promote solutions rather than assigning blame (Cox & Paddon Rhoads, 2020).

Promote Constructive Dialogue: Setting up structured dialogue platforms that involve both Israeli representatives and those from nations supporting Palestinian or Iranian perspectives would help reshape aggressive narratives into collaborative ones. By creating spaces for direct, moderated engagement, the UN can foster mutual understanding and support a shift from adversarial positions toward joint problem-solving (Tabatabai & Esfandiary, 2015).

Limit Sensationalism in Reporting: Encourage the use of careful language in UN reports, avoiding terms that frame one side as solely responsible. Consistent with the UN's mission of peace and neutrality, such an approach would help to reduce inflammatory rhetoric and support objective, solution-oriented discussions (Katzman, 2020).

Countering Iran's Strategies for Leveraging Multilateral Institutions for Geopolitical Gains

Implementation of Safeguards Against Coalition Bias: Iran's influence within multilateral forums like the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation often aligns groups in support of its stances, especially when critical of Israel. To counterbalance such influence, the UN should create procedural checks that ensure coalition dynamics do not overshadow individual member states' interests or lead to unbalanced resolutions. This could involve requiring broader international support before resolutions can pass (Wehrey, 2018).

The establishment of a neutral review mechanism to evaluate sanctions' impacts on humanitarian conditions, especially in Iran. This mechanism would prevent manipulation of humanitarian arguments and hold Iran accountable while still considering genuine civilian needs. Such a

balanced approach to sanctions enforcement would maintain focus on global security without letting humanitarian exceptions serve as a loophole for geopolitical maneuvering (Esfandiary & Tabatabai, 2015).

Enhance UN Cooperation with Independent Expert Panels: Collaboration with third-party experts, such as regional scholars and peace-building NGOs, would allow for diverse, informed perspectives in decision-making. Independent input would counterbalance any state-driven narratives and provide checks against potential manipulation of UN forums by geopolitical actors like Iran (Ehteshami & Zweiri, 2012).

In summary, by ensuring neutrality and transparency in its operations, promoting balanced narratives, and counteracting external influences on decision-making, the UN can more effectively address the complexities of the Middle East conflict. These measures would reinforce the UN's relevance and fairness as a mediator in international affairs, fostering a more constructive environment for peace and security.

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