

# Chapter 3

## THE 1967 AND 1973 WARS



Photo: United Nations

Security Council adopts resolution 242 (1967).

With the question of Palestine unresolved, an uneasy peace, punctuated by violence and acts of force, was maintained in the region from 1950 until 1967, when Israel came to occupy the entire area of the former British Mandate of Palestine.

### **Establishment of UNEF I**

Earlier, armed conflict had erupted in 1956, when, on 29 October, Israel began military operations against Egypt, joined later by France and the United Kingdom. In a politically charged atmosphere, Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal in July of that year. The crisis ended with a ceasefire called for by the General Assembly at an emergency special session, the eventual withdrawal of the invading forces and the deployment of the

United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF I)—the first United Nations peacekeeping force.

UNEF I was withdrawn in May 1967 at the request of Egypt, which had informed the Secretary-General that it would no longer consent to the stationing of the force on Egyptian territory and in Gaza. On 5 June 1967, hostilities broke out between Israel and Egypt, Jordan and Syria. By the time a ceasefire called for by the Security Council was accepted by the parties, Israel had occupied the Egyptian Sinai, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank including East Jerusalem and part of the Syrian Golan Heights.

After the ceasefire was secured, the Security Council adopted resolution 237 (1967), in which it called upon Israel to ensure the safety, welfare and security of the inhabitants of the areas where military operations had taken place and to facilitate the return of the displaced persons. The Governments concerned were asked to respect scrupulously the humanitarian principles governing the protection of civilian persons in time of war contained in the Fourth Geneva Convention, of 1949. At its fifth emergency special session, convened after the fighting began, the General Assembly called upon Governments and international organizations to extend emergency humanitarian assistance to those affected by the war. The Assembly asked Israel to rescind all measures already taken and to desist from taking further action which would alter the status of Jerusalem.

### **Security Council resolution 242 (1967)**

Later that year, on 22 November, the Security Council unanimously adopted, after much negotiation, resolution 242 (1967), laying down principles for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East. The resolution stipulated that the establishment of a just and lasting peace should include the application of two principles:

- \* Withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict; and
- \* Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territo-

rial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.

The resolution also affirmed the territorial inviolability of every State in the region and called for “achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem”.

Egypt and Jordan accepted resolution 242 (1967) and considered Israeli withdrawal from all territories occupied in the 1967 war as a precondition to negotiations. Israel, which also accepted the resolution, stated that the questions of withdrawal and refugees could be settled only through direct negotiations with the Arab States and the conclusion of a comprehensive peace treaty. Syria rejected the Council action, maintaining that the resolution had linked the central issue of Israeli withdrawal to concessions demanded from Arab countries. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) strongly criticized the resolution, which it said reduced the question of Palestine to a refugee problem.

### **War of 1973 and Security Council resolution 338 (1973)**

In October 1973, war broke out again between Egypt and Israel in the Suez Canal area and the Sinai and between Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic on the Golan Heights. As fighting reached a critical stage, the Soviet Union and the United States jointly requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council. On 22 October, the Security Council adopted resolution 338 (1973), which reaffirmed the principles of resolution 242 and called for negotiations aimed at “a just and durable peace in the Middle East”. The ceasefire call was later confirmed in resolution 339 (1973) of 23 October, and the Secretary-General was requested to dispatch United Nations observers immediately.

However, as fighting continued in the region, President Anwar el Sadat of Egypt appealed directly to the Soviet Union and the United States to intervene with troops and enforce the ceasefire. While the Soviet Union agreed, the United States



## Security Council resolutions 242 and 338

Security Council resolution 242, adopted on 22 November 1967, and resolution 338, adopted on 22 October 1973, are considered basic instruments in all subsequent discussions of a Middle East peace settlement.

### 1) Security Council resolution 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967

*The Security Council,*

*Expressing its continuing concern with the grave situation in the Middle East,*

*Emphasizing the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every State in the area can live in security,*

*Emphasizing further that all Member States in their acceptance of the Charter of the United Nations have undertaken a commitment to act in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter,*

1. *Affirms* that the fulfillment of Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include the application of both the following principles:
  - (i) Withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict;
  - (ii) Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force;
2. *Affirms further* the necessity
  - (a) For guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area;

- (b) For achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem;
  - (c) For guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every State in the area, through measures including the establishment of demilitarized zones;
3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to designate a Special Representative to proceed to the Middle East to establish and maintain contacts with the States concerned in order to promote agreement and assist efforts to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement in accordance with the provisions and principles in this resolution;
4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the progress of the efforts of the Special Representative as soon as possible.

Adopted unanimously at the 1382nd meeting.

### 2) Resolution 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973

*The Security Council,*

1. *Calls upon* all parties to the present fighting to cease all firing and terminate all military activity immediately, no later than 12 hours after the moment of the adoption of this decision, in the positions they now occupy;
2. *Calls upon* the parties concerned to start immediately after the ceasefire the implementation of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) in all of its parts;
3. *Decides* that, immediately and concurrently with the ceasefire, negotiations shall start between the parties concerned under appropriate auspices aimed at establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East.

Adopted at the 1747th meeting by 14 votes to none.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One member (China) did not participate in the voting.