Introduction

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SHAPED BY THE PALESTINE QUESTION

Born in 1945 in San Francisco, the United Nations cut its teeth in the Arab world. It hastened into action, unprepared, only two years after its creation when the British abandoned their obligations in Palestine under the League of Nations mandate. Pushed by the great powers that emerged dominant after World War II, a raw UN was asked to sort out what became its first mission and would remain its most enduring problem unresolved to this day. With a narrow majority, the UN General Assembly controversially partitioned Palestine over the vocal protests by the Arab and other states of the global South—then in a minority with the main decolonization period still around the corner.

Partition led to the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948 and the subsequent expulsion of hundreds of thousand of Palestinians from their homes. The declaration of the state of Israel, recognized immediately by the Soviet Union and the United States, put the various UN agencies in an impossible position. Palestinian refugees would need to be sheltered and taken care of until they would be—it was thought—permitted to return to their homes and an overall political solution was reached. As the Arab-Israeli conflict widened and Cold War lines hardened, the Security Council repeatedly failed in its primary objective of maintaining peace and security, leaving these fledgling UN agencies to mitigate the damage. This is where the UN remains today on the Palestine question, almost seven decades later.

Many of the early UN agencies were born of this conflict over Palestine, and many others yet would find themselves embroiled in it. Little that the UN did,

or does, is not found in the narrow strip of land along the *mashriqi* (Levantine) coast, whether it be relief operations for the Palestinian refugees (the UN Relief and Works Agency [UNRWA]); observer missions and peace operations along the unsettled borders (the UN Truce Supervision Organization, the UN Emergency Force, the UN Disengagement Observer Force, the UN Interim Force in Lebanon [UNIFIL]); advisory opinions by the International Court of Justice (the "Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory"); use of good offices by the secretary-general; fact-finding missions through the UN Human Rights Council; political negotiations and statehood bids at the UN General Assembly and Security Council; or participation in the post–Cold War "peace process" that was partially mediated by the UN, albeit through a distinctly ineffective role within the "Middle East Quartet."

The Palestine conflict introduced the idea of a political role for the special representative of the secretary-general (the Chinese official, Dr. Victor Hoo, whose role in 1946 effectively paved the way for what would become "peacemaking").[1] The struggle over Palestine produced the institutions of "peacekeeping" and of the "UN mediator" (with the appointment in 1948 of Count Folke Bernadotte, who, after his assassination in Jerusalem, was succeeded by the American Ralph Bunche, the first to receive a Nobel prize for such a role). "Peacekeeping" includes both the unarmed observer mission type (supervising the May 1948 truce) and the armed UN peacekeeping type (along the Egypt-Israel border following the Suez War of 1956). "Peacekeeping" was not mentioned in the UN Charter. For this reason, it required a special dispensation: the Dag Hammarskjöld peacekeeping doctrine with its core principles of consent of the parties, impartiality of the peacekeepers, and nonuse of force except in self-defense. Hammarskjöld's often-used term *Chapter Six and a Half* indicated that the phenomenon of peacekeeping would stand somewhere between peaceful resolution of disputes (Chapter VI of the UN Charter) and the use of force to restore peace and security (Chapter VII).

It is no wonder, therefore, that almost half the essays in this book cover the Palestine question, which has provided a mirror into the workings of the international community. UN special commissions came and went in Palestine, shows Lori Allen, but little moved in the way of an emancipatory politics. Reading the UN as a site where "the world" is imagined, Allen argues that it has been a venue both for making political claims and for offering hope. Ilana Feldman's work suggests that the creation of the very first UN peacekeeping force in 1956 along the Gaza-Israeli border represented a new

way of thinking about international engagement in the cause of humanity and helped shape the basic principles of peacekeeping.[2]

Filippo Grandi and Jalal Al Husseini show us the contradictions between the UN's essential humanitarian role in advocating for Palestinians and its failure in the more political process of ensuring their self-determination. In his deeply personal essay, Grandi, the former commissioner-general of the UN agency tasked to manage Palestinian lives (UNRWA) and the current UN High Commissioner for Refugees, bears witness to the everyday struggles and resilience of refugees and explores why leading this agency is a "unique experience" and one of the UN's most challenging managerial tasks. For his part, Al Husseini offers insight into the interplay between humanitarian/developmental concerns of UNRWA and the political interests of the donors, host countries, and the refugees themselves. He suggests that this agency has become a site of contest among the different players and agendas.

The contemporary conflict around Palestine continues to draw the UN in and to expose the UN contradictions further as a site of conflict rather than a monolithic organization. Richard Falk's essay reflects on his role as special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, a position in the UN Human Rights Council. He details the controversies and pressures attached to this job and shows that the "UN" comprises different layers, agendas, and interests: while the secretary-general in New York, Falk says, permitted personal attacks against him, the leadership and professionals of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva strongly supported his efforts in what he calls the "legitimacy war." Noura Erakat's essay focuses on the latest Palestinian "statehood" bid at the UN starting in 2011, over fifty years after partition. She demonstrates that this bid marked the potential Palestinian leadership's return to the multilateral forum provided by the UN, a primary site of Palestinian advocacy until the start of the US-dominated "peace process" initiated at Oslo during the 1990s.

Part of the unresolved Palestinian conflict is of course the four-decade-long battle over southern Lebanon, where first Palestinian, then Lebanese resistance forces fought over land and narratives, culminating in the seminal 2006 Lebanon-Israel war that has produced a "balance of terror." Karim Makdisi's essay argues that the war on terror gave global meaning to this confrontation and to the construction of UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which authorized a more robust mandate to the long-standing

peacekeeping mission in southern Lebanon (UNIFIL) that had largely gained, over two decades, the trust of the local population. He shows that Israel's failure to defeat Hizbullah in 2006 militarily resulted in Resolution 1701 comprising two contradictory narratives representing the battle for and against US domination, a battle that was transferred onto the Lebanese state. Susann Kassem's essay takes an ethnographic lens to zoom in at the practice of UNIFIL's post-2006 "Quick Impact Projects," small-scale and short-term development projects carried out with local municipalities. These projects, she argues, illustrate the mission's contradictions and its frequently thorny relations with the local population, who welcome the relief work but reject their underlying political objective of constructing a rival authority and influence to Hizbullah in southern Lebanon.

There is an increasing international acceptance that the US-led "peace process" for Palestine-Israel has failed. Violence is rife and occupation entrenched. Walid Khalidi has argued that no lasting reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis is possible today without an acknowledgment of the deep historical context of the conflict. He warns that the dominant version of events in Israel and the West—that the UN partition plan was the start of the Palestinian problem, since Arabs rejected Israel—must be reconciled with the Palestinian narrative that the partition was a catastrophe (Nakba) that displaced enormous numbers of Palestinians from their homes.[3] In this sense, and with little hope of a political solution to the Palestine question in the near future, the UN has gradually moved toward nation building without national liberation. It is here that the keen analysis from Raja Khalidi and Mandy Turner come in, with both having looked carefully at the economic development of the Palestinian Authority and at the idea of peacebuilding.

Could Palestine, still under UN auspices, develop an economic agenda for the Palestinian people? Even the International Monetary Fund said in 2013 that the West Bank and Gaza Strip have a "dim" future unless "obstacles to economic growth" are removed through "a broad-based and sustained easing of Israeli restrictions, not linked to specific projects and underpinned by clear progress in the peace process."[4] The World Bank, as well, complained that development was not possible with checkpoints and other restrictions to movement.[5] Raja Khalidi's essay is premised on the kind of pessimism over conditions that even the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank recognize. For her part, Turner shows how the use of peacebuilding as a policy discourse and practice in the Palestinian territories has created what she terms a "zombie peace," an ambling corpse that "staggers on, refusing to die."

TRANSFORMED IN IRAQ, SEEKING A ROLE DURING THE ARAB UPRISINGS

The Arab-Israeli wars dominated the UN's work in the region during the Cold War period (over 50 percent of peacekeeping missions worldwide were deployed there). In the post–Cold War era, there is no doubt that in Iraq, particularly after 1990, the UN faced its greatest challenge. The tragic great geopolitical game there ripped Iraq up over two wars (in 1990 and the 2003), a two-decade brutal UN sanctions regime, and a decade-long unremittingly bloody sectarian civil war. Indeed, no fewer than two new world orders were proclaimed at the UN in, or over, Iraq during this period. First President George H. W. Bush proclaimed the 1990 war to liberate Kuwait as the triumph of multilateralism embodied in the newfound activism of the UN Security Council, now equally liberated from Soviet checks and balances. Then President George W. Bush used Iraq as a main locus to prosecute the war on terror. Indeed one could add the more recent emergence of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) to the list of "international" problems that the wars in Iraq have produced.[6]

Before the UN resolutions to authorize the use of force against Iraq in 1990, the Security Council had used that authority only four times previously: once for the Korean War (1950), twice for the civil war in the Congo (1961), and once for the war in Rhodesia (1966). In the post–Cold War era, the West pushed the Council to use Chapter VII (use of force) resolutions with greater frequency. Iraq set the tone for the new era of use of force and sanctions. That is why some of the most powerful essays in this book are on the experience of the UN in Iraq. Poorvi Chitalkar and David Malone's essay speaks to the "Ghosts of Iraq," the lingering effects of the Security Council's engagement with Iraq over four decades. They show how this engagement has not only reflected wider patterns of international relations but also, crucially, *defined* them, and how learning from Iraq has changed the Council's approach to promoting international security.

Chitalkar and Malone's essay sets the tone for those that follow on the use-of-force resolutions (by Coralie Hindawi), on the sanctions regime (by Hans Christof von Sponeck, UN humanitarian coordinator for Iraq from 1990 to 2000), and on the refugees that then moved around the region in search of a provisional home (by Arafat Jamal, who served as the deputy head of mission for the main Iraq program of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] in Jordan). Hindawi argues that rather than being reborn in Iraq

after its demise during the Cold War (as was then loudly proclaimed), the UN collective security system was in fact buried again in Iraq as the Chapter VII regime became a trap from which Iraq had no chance to escape. Von Sponeck draws on his vast experience to vividly recount how the most comprehensive economic sanctions ever imposed by the United Nations (1990–2003) were implemented in "an iron-fist and an inhuman" way at the expense of the Iraqi civilians and traces how the humanitarian exception to these sanctions (via the innovative Oil-for-Food program) was overshadowed by powerful Western interests for regime change in Iraq. The UN was, in short, caught between geopolitical considerations and its humanitarian mission.

A seminal, traumatic moment for the UN in Iraq was on August 19, 2003, when a Kamaz truck settled near Baghdad's Canal Hotel, the UN headquarters since the 1990s. The truck bomb exploded and killed twenty-two people, including the UN special representative to Iraq, Sérgio Vieira de Mello. It was clear that the UN staff in the region had opposed an active UN mission in the country that was then under US occupation. The UN Secretariat had not been in favor of the 2003 invasion, and it did not want to be seen to be too close to what amounted to an illegal war and occupation. This was not to be. By the early 2000s, many UN agencies had little room to maneuver amid assertions in some quarters of the UN's irrelevancy in the war on terror era. However, Arafat Jamal argues forcefully that in the aftermath of the 2003 war's unprecedented, forced displacement of Iraqi refugees, UNHCR played a crucial (and unplanned) role in redefining the image of the UN by creating a space for international humanitarianism to take root in the region for the first time. The growing role for humanitarianism was, however, overwhelmed during the recent Syrian war as the extent of Syrian civilian displacement, and their voyages to settle somewhere safe, became epic.

It was the "ghost of Iraq" that lingered over the Syrian conflict during its first three years, making any effective UN action to resolve the war there impossible. But there was also the more recent ghost of the 2011 Libyan conflict—as Jeff Bachman shows. After Iraq, the West attempted to recover some of the legitimacy of humanitarian interventionism through the doctrine of Responsibility to Protect (R2P), accepted in principle by the UN member states in 2005 as part of the UN's mandate. R2P states that if civilians are threatened with serious harm in a conflict, and the state is unable or unwilling to protect them, then the international community has the responsibility to act. The test for R2P in the region came in Libya, where it was soon found, by member states such as China, India, and Russia, to have been misused.[7] Bachman argues that

the intervention of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was predicated on an "ulterior motive exemption" that actually put civilians at greater risk and violated international law. The subsequent collapse of Libya into the morass of insecurity and violence has dented the idea of armed intervention as humanitarianism. After Iraq and Libya, it would be hard to get such a Chapter VII (use of force) resolution out of the UN Security Council.

In many of these recent wars that followed the Arab uprisings starting in 2010, the United Nations has become a convenient punching bag for all sides of the political spectrum. It is blamed if crises are not solved and if relief efforts fall short. In fact, as Richard Falk has shown elsewhere, the UN is always constrained by geopolitics, though it does serve as a site for struggle over legitimacy claims by warring factions.[8] Syria's intractable politics are placed squarely in the lap of the United Nations, as if the UN could itself cut through the Gordian Knot of geopolitical confusion and mendacity. In their essay, Aslı Bâli and Aziz Rana chart the politics that swirled around the UN as it sought to address the conflict's international security dimension, respond to the urgent humanitarian needs of the civilian population, and create a political framework for conflict resolution. Their essay cannot track the ongoing negotiations, but it does capture the essence. Clearly it is not the UN's fault that a political solution in Syria has not been found: the complexity of geopolitics, the regional dynamics set in motion in the aftermath of the US invasion of Iraq, the Arab Spring and the dangerous politics inside Syria have all played a part. Yet the UN is accused of being a failure. Such a view mystifies the UN and makes it appear far more powerful than it is.

The UN, however, has a more mundane and limited function than to fix all problems and solve all disputes. Bâli and Rana argue that unlike militarized intervention pursued contemporaneously by key states, only UN involvement retains the possibility or space for local and external parties to the Syrian conflict to negotiate a political settlement. The mediation attempts by UN envoys Kofi Annan, Lakhdar Brahimi, and Staffan de Mistura, for instance, tried to create space for Syria peace talks to proceed, and indeed some breakthroughs were reached in the Geneva meetings that brought together key international, regional, and local players in the conflict. Further possibilities were opened up when in September 2013, following a bilateral agreement between Russia and the United States, the Security Council authorized the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations to establish a joint mission to eliminate Syria's declared

chemical weapons stockpile. Unprecedented international cooperation—which involved complex land and maritime operations—and a willing Syrian government seeking international legitimacy opened the way for the UN to prove its worth when called upon. This "unique" mission, in the midst of a civil war, achieved clear success by the summer of 2014. It did not, however, have any impact on the larger political negotiations.[9] Those had to wait for the 2015 Russian intervention, which once again changed the geopolitics around Syria and made space for UN involvement through the Russian-US entente.

POLITICS AROUND THE UNITED NATIONS

What is the United Nations? It is at least two different entities. The first and most public face of the UN is the Security Council, which has come to stand in as the executive of the UN body. It is made up of fifteen countries, five of them permanent members (the P5: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and the others elected by the UN General Assembly for two-year terms. The P5 hold veto power over the decisions of the Council, allowing any one of them to use their veto to scuttle a decision not to their liking. The nonpermanent members are allocated on a fixed regional basis: five for African and Asian States; two each for Latin American and Western European (and other) States respectively; and one for Eastern European States. By tradition, one of the seats allocated to Asia or Africa (on a rotating basis) is held by an Arab state. The Security Council stands in for the General Assembly, whose 193 members are able to pass resolutions that try to set the tone for world opinion but that, in the post–Cold War period in particular, are often ignored. The relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly is fraught, with the former seeing itself as independently able to chart policy while the majority of the world's states see the latter as the embodiment of a true democratic institution. The UN General Assembly resolutions are unable to bind any discussion in the Security Council, whose own resolutions can contravene those of the will of the General Assembly, as the voting for the Palestine statehood bid in 2013 illustrated.

It is the task of the secretary-general to hold together the Security Council and the General Assembly, the P5 and the rest of the planet. Andrew Gilmour (who is currently director of the UN Secretary-General's Office for Political, Peace-Keeping, Humanitarian and Human Rights) scans the history of the

secretary-generals and their work in the Arab world. As Gilmour explains, seven of the eight secretary-generals were confronted with Arab-Israeli wars, four faced Iraq, and every one of them had to deal with serious violence between Israel and some of its neighbors. We open the book with Gilmour's essay not only to provide a necessary historical sweep of the UN's work in the Arab world but also to show how the secretary-general has had to operate in the framework of international politics. Gilmour demonstrates that while secretary-generals do matter they have all too often been frustrated by (and scapegoated for) the unwillingness of the parties to resolve their problems and of other member states to play a constructive role in support of peace.

The second part of the UN is its myriad agencies, each set up to deal with the various crises of the modern age. Some of these agencies have histories that predate the UN itself. The International Labour Organization, for instance, was created in 1919 but was integrated into the UN system in 1946 to become the first specialized UN agency. Walid Hamdan shows how its work in the Arab world is constrained by regional politics—mainly the stranglehold of the Gulf countries over any discussion of labor reforms. Other agencies would follow: the UN Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), to advocate for the rights of children; the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), to promote tolerance and respect for the world's cultures; and so on.

As the UN passed resolutions and drew up conventions, a wide range of specialized agencies developed to ameliorate the tragic conditions of modern life. These UN agencies provide relief and advocacy for refugees, move nuclear energy from war to peace, improve telecommunications around the world, provide development assistance, and many other functions. The range of work is impressive, although the outcomes tend to be more modest given the many challenges and limitations these agencies face, such as most obviously a dependency on funding from key states such as the United States. When the P5 do agree on an important task, such as eliminating Syria's chemical weapons, funding and political will become nonissues in the completion of the task. When they do not agree, there is paralysis. Zachariah Mampilly suggests another limitation, namely the uneven distribution of tasks in dangerous peacekeeping zones. In his essay on the peace operation in Sudan, Mampilly points to the alarming gap between peacekeeping contributor countries who provide troops (largely from the Third World) and the de facto peacekeeping policy makers (usually Western states). But anemic funds and uneven distribution of tasks result largely because of the contradictions

among the P5, and between the P5 and the rest of the member states of the UN. It is, in the final analysis, the politics of the member states that has limited the potential of the United Nations as an institution.

POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE UN

Over the past sixty years, the politics of the United Nations has depended upon the vicissitudes of global geopolitics. The historian Mark Mazower has traced the very idea of the UN to the British Empire's vision of world order embodied eventually through the creation of the League of Nations and then reborn in San Francisco in 1945.[10] Palestine's partition exemplified this order. In the throes of the Cold War, however, the animosity between the West and the East and the avenues for democracy in the United Nations system allowed the newly independent and assertive nations to insert their anti-imperial agenda into the interstices of the agencies and into the General Assembly.[11]

The Cold War between the United States and the USSR cooled the bonhomie of the early years in the UN. The USSR largely withdrew from the fray, taking the view that the West had already dominated the institutions. The main tussle in the UN in these early decades was, therefore, not between the United States and the USSR—which is what is almost always the assumption—but between the West and the Third World. There is no better testimony to this than the emergence of the Nonaligned Movement (1961), the UN Conference on Trade and Development (1964), and the Group of 77 (1964), the bloc of the South. These institutions—one of which was a UN specialized agency—would be the main sources of pressure on the West. The main arena of conflict was over the ideas of economic development, as represented by the General Assembly's *Declaration for the Establishment of a New International Economic Order* (1974), which was rejected by the Western bloc.

With the collapse of the USSR and the global debt crisis of the 1980s, the West seized power over the management of world affairs. Under the name of globalization, the West was able to push an ideological agenda in the various development agencies. The creation of the World Trade Organization and the marginalization of the UN Conference on Trade and Development illustrate this. By asserting itself through human rights interventionism, the West was able to bend the UN Security Council to its view of dangers in the world. The long conflict with Iraq from 1990 to the present highlights this. Political

direction for the UN's work increasingly came from the Western capitals, with a UN bureaucracy often frustrated with the ideological nature of the demands on the agency. In the Arab world, the UN began to be seen increasingly as a hostile entity whose political, security, and development agendas represented Western interests. Even so, illustrating the UN's two worlds (Security Council and UN agencies), agencies such as UNICEF and UNESCO were fully accepted and continued to work as though they were part and parcel of local society.

Arab states, which had promised national development but held back, for the most part, on democracy, faced severe challenges in the 1980s. No longer could they subsidize food and provide employment in the state sector. Pressure from the Washington Consensus struck them hard. The national development agenda went by the wayside, as Omar Dahi shows. Weakened state policy on economic lines did not weaken the states themselves. Many became obdurate: much more harsh with repression, much less willing to consider alternatives. It is in this climate that the Arab Spring emerged, with a demand not only for greater political choices but also for economic justice. Here as well popular pressure played a role.

Human rights agencies and nonstate institutions began to make use of the UN—as Kinda Mohamadieh and Fateh Azzam show—to push the Arab regimes toward a more reasonable order. Azzam asserts that the Arab revolts starting in 2010 can be understood as a collective demand by citizens and civil society groups for a speedier implementation of a human rights–based approach in which the UN remains a crucially important forum to cajole Arab states. Mohamadieh suggests that Arab civil society groups have engaged with the UN in the region to conduct policy dialogue (otherwise denied them) with governments, hold them accountable, and advance alternative development narratives. In this sense, as in other cases illustrated in this book, the UN serves in a positive way as a site—otherwise absent—for national struggles and for legitimacy claims.

Still, broken politics on the world stage has made it extremely hard for the UN agencies to operate. Promises of funds come largely because of the gravity of the crises, but these funds are rarely delivered. Like Filippo Grandi's essay on UNRWA, Shaden Khallaf's essay on the Syrian refugee crisis shows us how the operations of the UN continue despite great financial challenges. She builds on her considerable experience with UNHCR to show how the extraordinary civilian suffering in Syria has engendered policy and funding challenges in formulating both emergency responses and longer-term developmental

solutions that include host countries and communities as well. The UN has long-term commitments, which rely not only on long-term delivery of funds but on cooperation with member states—some of which might be implicated in the very problem that the UN seeks to address. Caroline Abu Sa'Da's critique of the UN from the standpoint of much more flexible agencies such as Doctors without Borders (MSF) should be taken very seriously but also seen in its context: MSF does not have the kinds of commitments that the UN must uphold in terms of long-term activity and working with member states. Perhaps the way to think of the UN and groups like MSF is that they do complementary work, not that one is more important than the other. Flexible and innovative approaches to acute crises are necessary, but so too are the more permanent linkages to member states to deal with chronic crises.

The contemporary history of the region is marked by political crises. The Palestine question and the Iraq war were catastrophes fueled by great-power intervention: their negative effects reverberate around the region. The breakdown of UN mediation efforts in Yemen, Libya, and Syria—and their descent into civil war fueled by regional powers such as Saudi Arabia and Iran—illustrate the crucial need for the Security Council, especially its P5, to fully understand the regional, national, and local milieu before attempting statebuilding exercises. Out of this chaos, nonstate players such as ISIS have carved out territory and power. War brings with it devastation: refugee crises, starvation, and social distress. Into the breach came the UN agencies. It was their task to make sure that the Arab world did not perish under the weight of its crises. The UN refugee agency worked to house and feed the Iraqi refugees, until of course host countries, such as Syria, became exporters of refugees themselves. Increasingly, Jordan and Lebanon became homes for refugees, first Palestinians and then Iraqis and Syrians. The UN's humanitarian relief soon became a substitute for the services of states in the region. Funding for this work has been inadequate. Money is easily raised for war but hard to obtain for the outcomes of war.

READINGS

The literature on the UN greatly expanded in the post–Cold War period in line with the complexity and reach of various UN missions and agencies. Indeed, the creation of the Academic Council on the United Nations System, and its prominent journal *Global Governance,* embodied this academic inter-

est beyond individual institutes or case study analyses. However, there is remarkably very little *collective* work on the UN in the Arab world.

Perhaps more than any other project on the UN, Thomas G. Weiss and Rorden Wilkinson's coedited Global Institutions series for Routledge Press stands out as a comprehensive reference point for all matters of global governance, including the UN, with many dozens of volumes published over more than a decade. These cover, from a macro perspective, key international organizations, general concepts, and more in-depth knowledge in global governance. A small group of eminent scholars have worked over the years more specifically on a UN history project (a sixteen-volume project edited by Louis Emmerij, Richard Jolly, and Thomas Weiss for the University of Indiana Press), but this is mainly an institutional history of the UN rather than a history of UN engagement in this or that part of the world. Its titles are self-explanatory: *The Power of UN Ideas: Lessons from the First 60 Years* and *UN Voices: The Struggle for Development and Social Justice.*

Other prominent scholars have produced a growing number of general historical works (such as Mark Mazower's *No Enchanted Palace: The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations* or Stephen Schlesinger's *Act of Creation: The Founding of the United Nations*); dissection of seminal UN documents (such as William Durch et al.'s *The Brahimi Report and the Future of UN Peace Operations* or Gareth Evans's *The Responsibility to Protect: Ending Mass Atrocity Crimes Once and For All*); analyses of key UN agencies (such as Edward C. Luck's *The UN Security Council: Practice and Promise* and Alexander Betts et al.'s *The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): The Politics and Practice of Refugee Protection*); or textbooks (such as Thomas G. Weiss et al.'s *The United Nations and Changing World Politics,* Karen Mingst's *The United Nations in the 21st Century,* Sam Dawes and Thomas G. Weiss's *The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations,* or Alex Bellamy et al.'s *Understanding Peacekeeping*). Various UN practitioner biographies have also become more notable, including Kofi Annan's recent *Interventions: A Life in War and Peace* (co-written with Nader Moussavedeh), Brian Urquhart's *Ralph Bunche: An American Odyssey,* Marrack Goulding's *Peacemonger,* and Samantha Power's *Chasing the Flame: Sergio Vieira de Mello and the Fight to Save the World.*

UN books with a more regional focus have mainly been on Africa. Here there is an extensive literature. Adekeye Adebajo's edited volume *From Global Apartheid to Global Village: Africa and the United Nations* comprises thirty chapters on various aspects of the UN's work in Africa. Others have

focused more particularly on peace operations in Africa, such as Adebajo's *UN Peacekeeping in Africa from the Suez Crisis to the Sudan Conflicts* and Wyss and Tardy's edited volume *Peacekeeping in Africa: The Evolving Security Architecture,* or on specific peace operations such as Funmi Olonisakin's *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: A History of UNAMSIL* and Severine Autesserre's *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding.* The genocide in Rwanda and violence in Darfur have been comprehensively covered in, among many other works, Michael Barnett's *Eyewitness to Genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda*, Romeo Dallaire's *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*, and Mahmoud Mamdani's *Saviours and Survivors: Darfur, Politics and the War on Terror.*

On the other hand, many scholars have built up a significant archive of writings on the UN's role in the Arab world. These include Ilana Feldman's *Governing Gaza: Bureaucracy, Authority and the Work of Rule, 1917–1967;* Lori Allen's *The Rise and Fall of Human Rights: Cynicism and Politics in Occupied Palestine;* Sari Hanafi et al.'s *UNRWA and Palestinian Refugees: From Relief and Works to Human Development;* Richard Falk's *The Costs of War: International Law, the UN, and World Order after Iraq;* Coralie Hindawi's *Vingt ans dans l'ombre du chapitre VII: Éclairage sur deux décennies de coercition à l'encontre de l'Iraq;* and David Malone's *The International Struggle over Iraq: Politics in the UN Security Council, 1980–2005*. Many of these authors are represented in this book. There have also been several case study books (such as Ramesh Thakur's *International Peacekeeping in Lebanon: United Nations Authority and Multinational Force*), biographies (including Emmanuel Erksine's *Mission with UNIFIL*), and of course essays on the region written for academic and policy forums by scholars prominent in UN studies.

We also have an enormous literature by practitioners, including UN staff, which is often buried in long reports or in UN resolutions that are read only by experts. Some UN reports, however, break out of these closed expert circles and become widely cited, from UN under-secretary-general Alvaro de Soto's leaked 2007 "End of Mission Report" that details his frustrations as UN special coordinator for the Middle East peace process, to the "Goldstone Report," which summed up the UN Human Rights Council's independent fact-finding mission into war crimes following Israel's 2009 war in Gaza; and the series of Arab Human Development Reports commissioned by the UN Development Programme that critiqued how the Arab world's knowledge

deficits were holding back the region's "progress." Moreover, some key UN resolutions have themselves become considered as seminal in larger international political and legal terms, including the General Assembly's "Uniting for Peace" resolution—first used during the 1956 Suez war to bypass Security Council vetoes by France and the United Kingdom and establish the first peacekeeping mission, the UN Emergency Force; Security Council Resolution 242, which established the "land-for-peace" bargain in the aftermath of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war; and Security Council Resolution 1973, which resulted in the first military enforcement of the R2P doctrine during the 2011 NATO attacks on Libya.

There are also some useful memoirs by Arab diplomats who served in the UN that recount the logic and stories behind the role the UN played and the positions taken by Arab (and other) states at particular historical times, from Charles Malik's *Man in the Struggle for Peace* (1963) and Adnan Pachaghi's *Iraq's Voice at the United Nations, 1950–1969* to the more recent compilation by Lebanese ambassadors to the UN Ghassan Tueini and Nawaf Salam documenting their considerable experiences and Tarek Mitri's rich account of his experience as head of the UN mission in Libya. The UN's Oral History Archive has also become an important reference for practitioner voices from, and on, the region. In this regard, it seems clear that in a volume on the UN in the Arab world scholarly contributions must be supplemented by those of practitioners working in crucial moments of crisis in the region. Consequently, this book could not have been put together without the very important contributions of senior UN practitioners Andrew Gilmour, Hans Christof von Sponeck, Filippo Grandi, Fateh Azzam, Shaden Khallaf, Arafat Jamal, Raja Khalidi, Richard Falk, David Malone, and Walid Hamdan. They bring not only years of experience in the UN but also a keen analytical sense of the limitations of UN work. Indeed, their experiences and reflections clearly reveal that the UN is not just an institution but is made up of individuals whose work, often in struggle with others, matters.

Interest in the United Nations in the Arab world has grown exponentially as it has become apparent that the wars of the past decade and the war on terror in general have been quite good at generating instability but dangerously bad at setting the basis for peace. The UN has no magic bullet—indeed, it has been confronted with challenges that test its abilities. Public interest in the UN in the Arab region has not translated, however, into commensurate academic interest. Even in the region itself, and in Arabic, few in-depth academic works deal with the UN. Most of what is published in local Arabic

journals or newspapers covers in more journalistic ways crucial moments of conflict: Iraq during the 2003 war, the Gaza wars and Palestine refugees, southern Lebanon, and more recently Syria. We hope very much that our book will spur more such work in both English and Arabic. Other research must follow, and more comprehensive attempts to capture the UN's role in the Arab world will be produced by our peers. In this regard, Riccardo Bocco and Nikolas Kosmatopolous's edited volume *Peace and Experts: Knowledge and the Politics of Peacemaking in the Middle East* (May 2016) uses ethnographic and historical approaches to argue that peacemaking by an array of institutions and actors working in the Arab world—including the UN—must be regarded primarily as a field of power, expert authority, and struggles for hegemony. Khouri, Makdisi, and Wählisch's 2016 volume *Interventions in Conflict: International Peacemaking in the Middle East* draws insights from renowned UN practitioners in the Middle East such as Lakhdar Brahimi, Filippo Grandi, and Jan Eliasson to contextualize and understand the obstacles and challenges in peacemaking in the region.

Our book is divided into four sections—Diplomacy; Enforcement and Peacekeeping; Humanitarianism and Refugees; and Development. We have chosen these themes as the most important elements of UN work in the region. In these sections, we have essays on several countries, from Iraq to Libya. We are aware of many gaps of emphasis and of coverage, but our aim has not been to take an encyclopedic approach. We have merely provided a window into the kind of work the UN does in the Arab world and the politics that frames this work. Our claim is that the UN is a constant feature in the Arab world and that the Arab world serves as a central location for the UN.

The critical approach taken by some of the authors in this book does not in any way take away from all the contributors' assumption—whether explicit or implicit—that the UN and its agencies are indispensable to the modern world order. What criticism does emerge, in fact, underscores this importance by exposing the gap between the core, noble objectives contained in the UN Charter and the all-too-often failure of member states (especially the more powerful ones) to pursue these goals when their political, security, financial, or economic interests are at stake. The UN staff, both in the Secretariat and in the field, navigate to the best of their abilities within this gap, while local citizens and movements in the Arab region and beyond cling to the promises contained in the Charter and make use of the UN as a site of struggle, even if they are otherwise disenchanted with the UN's role.

This book, finally, deals not only with the UN *in* the Arab world but also with the UN *as seen from* the Arab world. We think it important that the idea for this project was supported by and in the American University of Beirut's Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, in a city (Beirut) that hosts the UN's regional commission (the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia) and a vast array of UN agencies and key missions. It exemplifies the location of a dynamic interaction both between the local and the global and between the two levels of UN we have detailed in this volume. Thus we feel that this book adds to the general literature on the UN, and indeed connects UN studies with Middle East studies and studies in international affairs and global governance. Unlike other anthologies on the UN, moreover, this volume also draws considerably from voices located in and perspectives relevant to the Arab region, ones that even a quick glance at general books on the UN reveals are largely marginalized. This, we feel, makes this volume even more original and, we hope, useful.

NOTES

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3. Walid Khalidi, "Revisiting the UNGA Partition Resolution," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 27, no. 1 (Autumn 1997): 5–21; and Walid Khalidi, "The Hebrew *Reconquista* of Palestine," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 39, no. 1 (Autumn 2009): 24–42.

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6. Vijay Prashad, *The Death of the Nation and the Future of the Arab Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016).

7. Vijay Prashad, "Syria, Libya and Security Council: An Interview with Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations," *Frontline,* PBS, March 10–23, 2012.

8. Richard Falk, "The UN in the Middle East, and the Arab Awakening," in *Interventions in Conflict: International Peacemaking in the Middle East,* ed. Rami G. Khouri, Karim Makdisi, and Martin Wählisch (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

9. See Karim Makdisi and Coralie Hindawi, *Creative Diplomacy amidst a Brutal Conflict: Analyzing the OPCW-UN Joint Mission for the Elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Program* (Beirut: Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, 2016).

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11. Vijay Prashad, *The Poorer Nations: A Possible History of the Global South* (New Delhi: LeftWord; New York: Verso, 2013); Branislav Gosovic, *The South Shaping the Global Future* (Bergen: Kolofon Press, 2014).