The failure of the United Nations in resolving the Palestine-Israel conflict: A Neorealist perspective

Kartini Aboo Talib @ Khalid¹, Dorcus Luwiza Mwango²

¹Institute of Ethnic Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia, ²Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jalan Wisma Putra, 50460 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Correspondence: Kartini Aboo Talib @ Khalid (email: k_khalid@ukm.edu.my / kartinikhalid@gmail.com)

Abstract

The existence of non-state actors at the international level has always been viewed within the liberalist and constructivist perspectives. However, despite being a major international organization, the UN’s role and decisions are influenced by super-powers such as the United States (US). This article examines the continuing significance of the United Nations’ (UN) inability to resolve the conflict between Israel and Palestine from the neorealist perspective. It delineates the weaknesses embedded in the UN and highlights the interventionist role played by the US. The method adopted was mainly qualitative, using a process tracing approach of secondary data to address events and key findings of the UN’s weaknesses and of the US’s intervention timeline. The findings revealed that the US influence was significant in that it instigated continuous violence in the Palestine-Israel conflict. The “what is” context in this study was further analyzed into a theoretical discussion the central argument of which was to explicate the neorealist approach, including the concepts of international systems and hegemony. It examined the state as the main actor in maximizing its capabilities to influence and dominate the international system. The role of the UN is now in question but the significance of its existence remains relevant to the international system because of state recognition besides humanitarian aids, development programmes and other member benefits. As this study demonstrates the result is that the state continues to be the most important factor driving the international system.

Keywords: hegemony, international systems neo-realism, Palestine-Israel conflict, United Nations, US’s intervention