United Nations General Assembly Vote on Gaza war

Why in news?

India abstained in a UN General Assembly (UNGA) vote on a resolution that called for an immediate humanitarian truce in the Israel-Hamas conflict.

What is the issue?

- Recently Hamas, a Palestinian militant group launched a surprise attack on Israel killing more than 1,400 people.
- This has led to the outbreak of war between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza.

To know more about the Israel Hamas conflict, click here

What is the UNGA voting about?

- **UNGA resolution** - The UNGA, met in a resumed 10th Emergency Special Session and voted on the draft resolution titled "*Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations*".
- It was submitted by ***Jordan*** and co-sponsored by more than 40 nations including Bangladesh, Maldives, Pakistan, Russia and South Africa.
- The resolution was adopted with 120 nations voting in its favour, 14 against it and 45 abstaining (***India also abstained***).
- India defended its decision to abstain in UNGA vote saying that the resolution did not include "*explicit condemnation*" of the terror attacks in Israel.
- **Earlier amendment** - The resolution did not make any mention of the militant group ***"Hamas"*** and the term "***hostage",*** with the US expressing outrage at the omission.
- Earlier, an amendment was proposed by *Canada and co-sponsored by the US* to insert a paragraph in the resolution to unequivocally reject and condemn the terrorist attacks by *Hamas* that took place in Israel and calls for their immediate and unconditional release.
- India voted in favour of the amendment but the draft amendment could not be adopted, having failed to obtain a two-third majority of members present and voting.

Unlike resolutions of the UN Security Council (UNSC), resolutions of the UNGA are ***not legally binding.***

What India's stand on the issue?

- Calling terrorism "a malignancy", India condemned violence, especially the attacks by Hamas, and called for the immediate and unconditional release of hostages.

- It balanced out its support with a statement on the plight of the people in Gaza and by not mentioning Hamas by name.
- India has also delivered humanitarian assistance to the people of Gaza.
- It expressed concern at the security situation and urged all parties —Israel, Iran, as well as groups like Hezbollah to exercise restraint and utmost responsibility.
- New Delhi also underlined its support for a negotiated ***"two-state solution*** leading to the establishment of a sovereign, independent and viable State of Palestine living within secure and recognized borders, side-by-side in peace with Israel.
- It underlined the primacy of diplomacy and dialogue calling on parties to de-escalate and create conditions for an early resumption of direct peace negotiations.

What lies ahead?

- India's position is in tune with its stand in the other ongoing conflict, the *Russia-Ukraine war*.
- India will need to mobilise its diplomatic skills and goodwill with the main actors to negotiate the coming weeks and months.

Quick facts

UNGA Emergency Special Session

- An UNGA emergency special session happens when the *UNSC is deadlocked* i.e. when one of the five permanent Council members (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States) uses their veto power to quash a related draft resolution.
- UN Member States can request the Assembly President to convene such a session to make appropriate recommendations for collective measures, including calling for ceasefires, the use of armed force, etc.
- If adopted by a two-thirds majority, the ***non-binding*** General Assembly resolution provides guidance for nations.

References

1. Indian Express | New Delhi walks diplomatic tightrope again
2. Indian Express | The UNGA vote on Gaza war
3. UN | UNGA Emergency Special Session

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