Mains Practice Question

Q. Issue of Israel-Palestine conflict can be attributed to both World Wars I & II. Discuss (250 Words)

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Approach

- Begin by providing a brief overview of the Israel-Palestine conflict.
- Discuss the roles played by events of World war 1 and 2 in the Israel-Palestine conflict.
- You can conclude by summarizing the key factors in the Israel-Palestine Conflict and its relevance in the present context.

Introduction

The Israel-Palestine conflict is a complex and long-standing dispute with historical roots dating back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. While World Wars I and II did not directly cause the conflict, they played significant roles in shaping the events and conditions that led to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Body

Role of World War-I in Escalating Israel-Palestine Conflict:

- **Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916):** The secret Sykes-Picot Agreement, in which the British and French divided the Middle East into spheres of influence, also contributed to the future geopolitical landscape of the region.
- **Balfour Declaration (1917):** During World War I, the British government issued the Balfour Declaration in 1917, which expressed support for the establishment of a "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine.
- **Jewish Immigration:** Balfour declaration had a profound impact on the future of the region by sowing the seeds for Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine and the demand for a home-state for Jews got vigorous momentum in the backdrop of this declaration.
- **Ottoman Empire:** Sykes-Picot Agreement further helped carve up the Ottoman Empire and laid the groundwork for the British Mandate in Palestine.In the long run, this only ended up polarizing the issue further and fomenting muslim brotherhood against Israel.
- **League of Nations Mandate:** World War I resulted in the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, which had controlled the region for centuries. The post-war settlement led to the League of Nations granting Britain the mandate to govern Palestine, further influencing the demographics and political dynamics of the area.

Role of World War II in Israel-Palestine Conflict:

- **Holocaust of Jews:** The horrors of the Holocaust during World War II prompted increased Jewish immigration to Palestine, as survivors sought refuge and a homeland. The British government faced pressure from both Jewish and Arab populations, leading to increasing tensions and violence.
- **United Nations Partition Plan (1947):** In the aftermath of World War II, the United Nations proposed a partition plan for Palestine, recommending the division of the territory into separate

Jewish and Arab states, along with an international administration for Jerusalem.

- **Arab-Israeli War:** The plan was accepted by Jewish leaders but rejected by Arab leaders, leading to the 1948 Arab-Israeli War which intensified the conflict further and led to politicization of the issue and provided the ground for the wars of 1967 and 1973.
- **Creation of Israel:** The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, following the war, marked a significant turning point in the conflict. It led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs and intensified hostilities between Israelis and Palestinians.

Present Scenario:

- **West Bank Issue:** The Israel-Palestine conflict has continued for decades, marked by multiple wars, uprisings, peace talks, and ongoing violence. The core issues revolve around territory, refugees, Jerusalem, security, and recognition. The conflict has also been exacerbated by the construction of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, which are considered illegal under international law.
- **Creation of Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO):**The PLO was created in 1964 for upholding the cause of Palestinians and providing for them the right to self-determination which waged many wars against Israel and involvement of neighboring countries made the issue multifaceted.
- **Hamas:** Created in 1987, the organization has sought the help of violent means and warfare techniques to help the Palestinian cause of two-nation state and to restore their full fledged sovereignty in Gaza strip.

Conclusion

While World Wars I and II did not directly cause the Israel-Palestine conflict, they set the stage for key developments that played a pivotal role in its emergence and continuation. The Balfour Declaration, Sykes-Picot Agreement, and the aftermath of World War II were instrumental in shaping the region's geopolitical landscape and the ethnic, religious, and political divides that continue to fuel the conflict today. The issue is multi-faceted and deeply rooted, with historical events and ongoing disputes contributing to its complexity.