

NEERJA MODI SCHOOL MODEL UNITED NATIONS'20

'Reimagining perspectives'

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Security Council

Agenda: Discussing pressing geopolitical concerns in Middle East North Africa (MENA)

Background guide

Letter from the Presidents

Hello Delegates,

A very humble welcome to the United Nations Security Council, a committee where we seek to protect, provide and prosecute. We work towards a common goal, and in the process, invoke the debater in us all.

But don't feel demotivated just yet, even if debating is not your forte. It's not mine either. A committee such as the UNSC, asks a lot more than that. Your research needs to be thorough, precise and organised. But like I said before, do not be overwhelmed, for we have a study guide to, well, guide you through. Do not depend on it, but you may begin your research with it.

During the committee sessions remember that your stance needs to be clear, and your voice needs to be heard. You are not just a delegate, but one that represents a country. You're not just a student, you're a diplomat.

With all that said, I hope to make your three days with us not just about winning but growing and learning. If you walked into the Security Council hoping to meet new people, and etch new memories, you have come to the right place.

Remember that you are here to ensure security, to work in unity, while maintaining the sovereignty of your individual talents. In simple words, even if you are working towards a common goal, do not be afraid to show your individuality. It's what sets you apart from the crowd.

I wish you luck all the luck. Feel free to contact us with any queries or concerns.

Regards,

Ansh Vaidya

Sanjhal Jain

(Presidents, United Nations Security Council)

Letter from the Vice Presidents

Dear Delegates,

As the Vice-Presidents, we would like to extend a warm welcome to all delegates of the United Nations Security Council at NMMUN 2020!

The primary objective of the UNSC is to maintain peace in the global environment and to exercise the responsibility to protect when necessary. The Security Council responds to acute crises concerning the security of the world and strives to deliver comprehensive resolutions to counter imminent threats.

The UNSC is of great international significance and encompasses diverse themes such as conflict resolution, and peacebuilding. Delegates are reminded that research is a core component of all deliberations, however, we also encourage spontaneous thinking and adapting to changing scenarios through the means of the intriguing crises that await you at the UNSC this year.

That said, we're looking forward to three days of high-level deliberations and a wide spectrum of unique ideas from all of you!

Sincerely,

Kaustubh Jain

Nirvair Narang

Arunima Saha

(Vice-Presidents, United Nations Security Council)

Introduction to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

The History of the UNSC

1. The Formation of the UN:

Following the end of World War II, victorious nations, namely the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union gathered to discuss the future of the world, effectively forming the bipolar world order. However, in the midst of division between once Allies nations, the United Nations was formed in 1945 after the San Francisco conference. It succeeded its predecessor, the League of Nations, which was proven to be ineffective to protect world peace. The UN consisted of 6 main bodies, the Secretariat, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council (ceased from functioning), the International Court of Justice and the Security Council.

2. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC):

The Security Council, the United Nations' principal crisis-management body, is empowered to impose binding obligations on the 193 UN member states to maintain peace. The council's five permanent and ten elected members meet regularly to assess threats to international security, addressing issues that include civil wars, natural disasters, arms control, and terrorism. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is charged with the maintenance of international peace and security, and so is responsible for the UN's role as negotiator, observer, peacekeeper and, ultimately, peace enforcer (UN Charter, Article VII). The Council has the power to pass legally binding resolutions, to suspend or expel members, to impose economic sanctions and to take military action to maintain or restore peace and security.

Aims and Functions of the UNSC

1. Promoting Peace and Security:

As the principal aim of the UN is 'to maintain international peace and security' (Article 1, UN Charter), the UNSC is responsible for ensuring it. The Council functions on the basis of "Collective security", a theory or practice of states pledging to defend one another from acts of aggression and to deter those deemed as aggressors (Heywood, 2011). The core idea of this theory is that an act of aggression is best to be dealt with by a united course of action

taken by a number of states. Aggressors, in this case, with the fear of being isolated in all aspects, will have no choice but to back down and respect international laws and order. However, states themselves cannot enforce collective security, which requires an international organization who has the moral authority and political capacity to represent them and take effective action. The UNSC, since its birth, has been providing states with mechanisms to facilitate peaceful resolution of international conflicts, such as the India-Pakistan war, the Israel-Palestine conflict, and many others. However, for much of its history, the UNSC and the UN itself were paralyzed by superpowers conflict. In the Cold War, the US and the USSR both supported opposing positions, hampering the decision-making process of the UNSC due to their veto powers (ibid).

2. Power:

The power of the UNSC lies in Chapter V of the Charter of the United Nations. Article 24th of the charter states that: ***“In order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and agree that in carrying out its duties under this responsibility the Security Council acts on their behalf.”*** The UNSC is also in charge of handling threats to international peace or worst, an act of aggression. Article 39 of the UN charter determines that the Security Council ***“shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken...”*** With that in mind, the Security Council is in charge of maintaining and restoring peace in regions where it is deemed necessary. In regions where the deployment of armed forces is needed to maintain peace and security, under Chapter VII of the UN charter and with the agreement all permanent members, the Security Council can authorise the use of any immediate military forces by members. The case was seen during the Korean War in 1950, where the Security Council authorised the use of forces against the clear act of aggression by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea against the Republic of Korea, or the authorisation of the Gulf War, notably Operation Desert Storm by the US (Wells, 2012). Nonetheless, there have been cases in history when the Security Council and the UN itself were bystanders in a clear breach of international law. Examples are the bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999 or the invasion of Iraq in 2003, which showed how the UN and the Security Council can be reduced in power and left unable to deal with such a clear breach of international law.

3. Members and their Powers:

The Security Council consists of 15 members, with 5 permanent members, and 10 non-permanent members which serve for a 2-year term. The 5 permanent members are: The United States of America, The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, French Republic, Russian Federation, and the People's Republic of China. Originally, the 5 permanent members were the victorious nations of the Second World War. As a successor of the League of Nations, the Security Council in particular and the United Nations in general inherited the power of its predecessor, but also effectively changed its function so as to not repeat the failure of the League of Nations. Specifically, the United Nations removed the unanimity rule, which was proven to have prevented the League of Nations from making vital decisions and rendered it powerless in stopping the escalation to World War 2. Nonetheless, the permanent members of the Security Council were granted the right to veto, also known as veto power. With this right, permanent members can single-handedly prevent any substantial matter (Wilcox, 1945). With aforementioned reasons, the veto power ensures the right of permanent and non-permanent members, while preventing the abuse of power from each of those states. Cases were mostly seen in the Cold War, when the Soviet Union (nowadays Russian Federation) relentlessly used its veto to protect its allies.

4. Peacekeeping:

As stated in chapter VII of the charter of the United Nations, the Security Council is endorsed for authorising the deployment of the peacekeeping forces of the United Nations. Such a decision must be reached and ratified by a collective decision from all members, specifically, 2/3 members of the Security Council. The Peacekeeping forces of the United Nations is authorised by the Security Council to conduct peacekeeping missions, dividing into 3 separate categories, namely, peace-making, peacebuilding and peace enforcing. The deployment of the Peacekeeping forces will be in order if the Security Council deemed as necessary. Currently there are over 90,000 active personnel in the Peacekeeping ranks with more than 120 countries participating in the program. Currently the UN Peacekeeping force has 15 deployment missions, mostly in Africa. Despite many successful missions, the Peacekeeping forces were left with many controversies, especially regarding war atrocities, human trafficking, force prostitution and most important, failure to defend the peace.

Agenda

“DISCUSSING PRESSING POLITICAL GEOPOLITICAL CONCERNS IN MENA (MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA)”

From 632 AD to this very split second, the story of the Shia Sunni split is an epic which has incited civil wars across generations of fragile regimes. From Libya to Yemen, the proxy wars not just between Iran and Saudi Arabia but also the involvement of international actors like the US, China and Russia have levelled countries in the MENA (Middle East North Africa) region to the ground. Today, the Iran nuclear deal has failed, the reforms of Saudi dictator Mohammad Bin Salman frustrated and the daylight assassination of Qasem Soleimani has ignited new conflicts and escalated past ones further. In the United Nations Security Council, we provide you with the reigns to bring peace back to the region by deliberating, negotiating and compromising.

MENA (Middle East & North Africa)

What is MENA?

MENA is an acronym for the **Middle East and North Africa (MENA)** region. The region includes approximately 19 countries, according to World Atlas. The MENA region accounts for approximately 6% of the world's population, 60% of the world's oil reserves, and 45% of the world's natural gas reserves. Due to the region's substantial petroleum and natural gas reserves, MENA is an important source of global economic stability.

The MENA region has grown in geopolitical importance since 2011 when a number of the region's long-time dictatorships were overthrown in an event known as The Arab spring. Following this event, oil supplies from Libya, for example, have been extremely volatile, influencing the price of oil on international markets. Additionally, civil war in Syria has brought the U.S. and Russia into direct military competition in a way not seen since the Vietnam War in the 1960s, 1970s, and the war in Afghanistan in the 1980s. Each country backs different sides and provides military assistance.

“With war and turmoil afflicting the MENA region, economic growth is forecast to improve to an average rate of 2.6% in 2019 to 2020”, says to the World Bank. According to the World Bank, the MENA region, "is in turmoil. Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen are locked in civil war, causing untold damage to human lives and physical infrastructure."

Dark Geopolitics of the Middle East

The region's autocrats and foreign intruders created growing disorder. Democratic reform is needed to spare the region from a future of failed states, popular revolts, and religious extremism.

A third wave of geopolitics has been making its way into Middle East political geography since the end of the Cold War. The first wave began with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. The second wave followed World War II, when the European colonial order crumbled. The third wave will reach its apex with the demise of the American order in the region and the spread of political disarray. The contemporary Middle East is the product of these three geopolitical waves. Among the consequences is the rise of the extremist group known as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

The key features of the emergent third wave of Middle East geopolitics are failed states, humiliated peoples, crippled economies, extreme inequality and poverty, devastated environments, plundered resources, conflicted geographies, foreign intrusions, and violent radicalism.

Continued conflict and violence have reversed years of educational attainments in Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Libya. More than half (50.8 percent) of all school-age children in Syria were prevented from attending school during 2014- 2015. In Yemen, the number of poor people has increased from 12 million prior to the war to more than 20 million people - 80 percent of the population--after the war.

Major effects of tensions in the MENA region:

- The economic costs of the recent conflicts and the refugee crisis are massive.
- High inflation and exchange rate pressures.
- Conflicts and large-scale refugee crises affect economies through multiple channels.

- Falling populations and displacement reduce human capital in conflict countries.
- Conflicts also reduce human capital by spreading poverty.
- Social cohesion has weakened across the region.

Israeli – Palestinian Conflict

Historical Background

Israel is the world's only Jewish state, located just east of the Mediterranean Sea.

Palestinians, the Arab population that hails from the land Israel now controls, refer to the territory as Palestine, and want to establish a state by that name on all or part of the same land. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is over who gets what land and how it's controlled.

Though both Jews and Arab Muslims date their claims to the land back a couple thousand years, the current political conflict began in the early 20th century. Jews fleeing persecution in Europe wanted to establish a national homeland in what was then an Arab and Muslim majority territory in the Ottoman and later British Empire. The Arabs resisted, seeing the land as rightfully theirs. An early United Nations plan to give each group part of the land failed, and Israel and the surrounding Arab nations fought several wars over the territory. Today's lines largely reflect the outcomes of two of these wars, one waged in 1948 and another in 1967. The 1967 war is particularly important for today's conflict, as it left Israel in control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, two territories home to large Palestinian populations.

Today, the West Bank is nominally controlled by the Palestinian Authority and is under Israeli occupation. This comes in the form of Israeli troops, who enforce Israeli security restrictions on Palestinian movement and activities, and Israeli "settlers," Jews who build ever-expanding communities in the West Bank that effectively deny the land to Palestinians. Gaza is controlled by Hamas, an Islamist fundamentalist party, and is under Israeli blockade but not ground troop occupation.

1. *Weaponry:*

The struggle between the Israeli military and the armed wings of Hamas and other Palestinian groups in the Gaza Strip is a classic asymmetrical conflict. The two sides are far from evenly matched, but each can nonetheless bring considerable pressure to bear upon the other.

Inevitably, though, the burden of casualties is asymmetric too. The death toll among Palestinians is rising markedly as the Israeli air campaign intensifies. The Gaza Strip is a relatively small area. Much of it is densely populated. Israel claims that a significant proportion of the Hamas infrastructure is located in civilian areas.

2. War Crimes and Killings:

Israeli military and security forces killed at least 38 Palestinians, including 11 children, during demonstrations in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Many were unlawfully killed by live ammunition or other excessive force when posing no imminent threat to life. Many of the unlawful killings appeared to be willful, which would constitute war crimes.

Israel held 182 Palestinian children in prison, including two in administrative detention, as of 30 November. Defense for Children International-Palestine said that children were interrogated without their parents present and placed with adults in prison. Under international law, detention of children should be a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate time.

On the other hand, Since the beginning of the second intifada, Palestinians have killed hundreds of Israeli civilians inside Israel proper and in the Occupied Territories. Attacks include suicide bombings, stabbings and shooting attacks perpetrated in Israeli population centers and on buses; stone throwing at cars and people; and Palestinian armed organizations firing rockets and mortar shells from the Gaza Strip. Deliberate targeting of civilians subverts all human, moral and legal norms. Therefore, international humanitarian law defines such attacks as grave breaches that constitute war crimes and cannot be justified.

From the beginning of the second intifada at the end of September 2000 through the end of September 2017, Palestinians killed 813 Israeli civilians, including 135 minors (children and teens under the age of 18). Of these casualties, 522 – including 87 minors – were killed within Israel's sovereign territory and 291, including 48 minors, were killed in the Occupied Territories.

Israeli - Palestinian Peace Efforts

“Oslo” is an ongoing American-mediated effort to broker a peace treaty between the two populations. Sometimes called “Oslo” after the 1993 Oslo Records that kicked it off, the peace process is an ongoing American-mediated effort to broker a peace treaty between Israelis and Palestinians. The goal is a “final status agreement,” which would establish a Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank in exchange for Palestinians agreeing to permanently end attacks on Israeli targets — a formula often called “land for peace.”

Many people believed the peace process to be over in January 2001. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat had just rejected his Israeli counterpart Ehud Barak’s peace offer (there’s huge disagreement as to just what that offer entailed). Moreover, renewed talks failed to generate an agreement, and worsening violence during the second intifada violence made another round of talks seem impossible.

Future Aspects

One-state solution: The first is to erase the borders and put Israelis and Palestinians together into one equal, pluralistic state, called the "one-state solution." Very few people think this could be viable for the simple reason of demographics; Arabs would very soon outnumber Jews. After generations of feeling disenfranchised and persecuted by Israel, the Arab majority would almost certainly vote to dismantle everything that makes Israel a Jewish state. Israelis, after everything they've done to finally achieve a Jewish state after thousands of years of their own persecution, would never surrender that state and willingly become a minority among a population they see as hostile.

Destruction of one side: The second way this could end is with one side outright vanquishing the other, in what would certainly be a catastrophic abuse of human rights. This is the option preferred by extremists such as Hamas and far-right Israeli settlers. In the Palestinian extremist version, Israel is abolished and replaced with a single Palestinian state; Jews become a minority, most likely replacing today's conflict with an inverse conflict. In the Israeli extremist version, Israel annexes the West Bank and Gaza entirely, either turning Palestinians into second-class citizens in the manner of apartheid South Africa or expelling them en masse.

Two-state solution: The third option is for both Israelis and Palestinians to have their own independent states; that's called the "two-state solution" and it's advocated by most everyone as the only option that would create long-term peace. But it requires working out lots of details so thorny and difficult that it's not clear if it will, or can, happen. Eventually, the conflict will have dragged on for so long that this solution will become impossible.

Syrian Crisis

Overview

Syria's civil war began during the Arab Spring in March 2011 as a peaceful uprising against the country's president, Bashar al-Assad. It has since escalated — more than 250,000 Syrians have lost their lives in four-and-a-half years of armed conflict, which began with anti-government protests before escalating into a full-scale civil war. As a result, more than 11 million others have been forced from their homes as forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad and those opposed to his rule battle each other - as well as jihadist militants from the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

Pro-democracy protests erupted in March 2011 in the southern city of Deraa after the arrest and torture of some teenagers who painted revolutionary slogans on a school wall. After security forces opened fire on demonstrators, killing several, more took to the streets. The unrest triggered nationwide protests demanding President Assad's resignation. The government's use of force to crush the dissent merely hardened the protesters' resolve. By July 2011, hundreds of thousands were taking to the streets across the country.

The Descent into Civil War

Violence escalated and the country descended into civil war as rebel brigades were formed to battle government forces for control of cities, towns and the countryside. Fighting reached the capital Damascus and second city of Aleppo in 2012.

By June 2013, the UN said 90,000 people had been killed in the conflict. By August 2015, that figure had climbed to 250,000, according to activists and the UN. The conflict is now more than just a battle between those for or against Assad. It has acquired sectarian

overtone, pitching the country's Sunni majority against the president's Shia Alawite sect. The rise of the jihadist group Islamic State (IS) has added a further dimension.

War Crimes

A UN commission of inquiry has evidence that all parties to the conflict have committed war crimes - including murder, torture, rape and enforced disappearances. They have also been accused of using civilian suffering - such as blocking access to food, water and health services through sieges - as a method of war.

The UN Security Council has demanded all parties end the indiscriminate use of weapons in populated areas, but civilians continue to die in their thousands. Many have been killed by barrel bombs dropped by government aircraft on gatherings in rebel-held areas - attacks which the UN says may constitute massacres. IS has also been accused by the UN of waging a campaign of terror. It has inflicted severe punishments on those who transgress or refuse to accept its rules, including hundreds of public executions.

Chemical Weapons

Hundreds of people were killed in August 2013 after rockets filled with the nerve agent sarin were fired at several suburbs of Damascus. Western powers claimed it could only have been carried out by Syria's government, but the government blamed rebel forces. Facing the prospect of US military intervention, President Assad agreed to the complete removal and destruction of Syria's chemical weapons arsenal. The operation was completed the following year, but the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has continued to document the use of toxic chemicals in the conflict.

Humanitarian Crisis

More than 4.5 million people have fled Syria since the start of the conflict, most of them women and children. Neighbouring Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey have struggled to cope with one of the largest refugee exoduses in recent history. About 10% of Syrian refugees have sought safety in Europe, and a further 6.5 million people are internally displaced inside Syria, 1.2 million were driven from their homes in 2015 alone. The UN says it will need \$3.2bn to help the 13.5 million people, including 6 million children, who will require some form of humanitarian assistance inside Syria in 2016. About 70% of the population is without access

to adequate drinking water, one in three people are unable to meet their basic food needs, and more than 2 million children are out of school, and four out of five people live in poverty.

Rebels and the Rise of the Jihadists

Islamic State has capitalised on the chaos and taken control of large swathes of Syria and Iraq, where it proclaimed the creation of a "caliphate" in June 2014. Its many foreign fighters are involved in a "war within a war" in Syria, battling rebels and rival jihadists from the al-Qaeda-affiliated Nusra Front, as well as government and Kurdish forces. In September 2014, a US-led coalition launched air strikes inside Syria in an effort to "degrade and ultimately destroy" IS. But the coalition has avoided attacks that might benefit Mr Assad's forces. Russia began an air campaign targeting "terrorists" in Syria a year later, but opposition activists say its strikes have mostly killed Western-backed rebels and civilians.

Peace Efforts

With neither side able to inflict a decisive defeat on the other, the international community long ago concluded that only a political solution could end the conflict in Syria. The UN Security Council has called for the implementation of the 2012 Geneva Communiqué, which envisages a transitional governing body with full executive powers "formed on the basis of mutual consent". The conflict with IS lent fresh impetus to the search for a political solution in Syria. The US and Russia led efforts to get representatives of the government and the opposition to attend "proximity talks" in Geneva in January 2016 to discuss a Security Council-endorsed road map for peace, including a ceasefire and a transitional period ending with elections.

The Proxy War

What began as another Arab Spring uprising against an autocratic ruler has mushroomed into a brutal proxy war that has drawn in regional and world powers. Iran and Russia have propped up the Alawite-led government of President Assad and gradually increased their support. Tehran is believed to be spending billions of dollars a year to bolster Mr Assad, providing military advisers and subsidised weapons, as well as lines of credit and oil transfers. Russia has meanwhile launched an air campaign against Mr Assad's opponents.

The Syrian government has also enjoyed the support of Lebanon's Shia Islamist Hezbollah movement, whose fighters have provided important battlefield support since 2013. The

Sunni-dominated opposition has, meanwhile, attracted varying degrees of support from its international backers - Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Jordan, along with the US, UK and France. Until late 2015, rebel appeals for anti-aircraft weapons to stop devastating government air strikes were rejected by the US and its allies, amid concern that they might end up in the hands of jihadist militants. A US programme to train and arm 5,000 rebels to take the fight to IS on the ground also suffered a series of setbacks before being abandoned.

Yemen Crisis

Overview

After six years of war, Yemen remains the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. More than 3.6 million people have been forced to flee their homes and 24 million Yemenis are in dire need of humanitarian assistance. Almost two-thirds of the population - approximately 20 million people - are on the brink of famine.

The Yemeni Civil War is an ongoing multi-sided conflict that began in late 2014 mainly between two factions: the Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi-led Yemeni government and the Houthi armed movement, along with their supporters and allies. Both claim to constitute the official government of Yemen. The Houthis are seen as a proxy for the Iranian Government, while the government in Yemen is backed by both Saudi Arabia as well as the United States government.

Descent into War

As president, Mr Hadi struggled to deal with a variety of problems, including attacks by jihadists, a separatist movement in the south, the continuing loyalty of security personnel to Saleh, as well as corruption, unemployment and food insecurity. The Houthi movement (known formally as Ansar Allah), which champions Yemen's Zaidi Shia Muslim minority and fought a series of rebellions against Saleh during the previous decade, took advantage of the new president's weakness by taking control of their northern heartland of Saada province and neighbouring areas.

Many ordinary Yemenis - including Sunnis - supported the Houthis, and in late 2014 and early 2015 the rebels gradually took over the capital Sanaa. The Houthis and security forces loyal to Saleh - who was thought to have backed his erstwhile enemies in a bid to regain power - then attempted to take control of the entire country, forcing Mr Hadi to flee abroad in March 2015. Saudi Arabia and eight other mostly Sunni Arab states began an air campaign aimed at defeating the Houthis, primarily in response to a group backed by Iran (Houthis) gaining influence over the region. The coalition received logistical and intelligence support from the US, UK and France. This started the war in Yemen which still continues to this day.

Humanitarian Crisis

The UN had verified the deaths of at least 7,700 civilians by March 2020, with most caused by Saudi-led coalition air strikes. However, we do not have enough information to determine whether this number is correct as Monitoring groups believe the death toll is far higher. The US-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) said in October 2019 that it had recorded more than 100,000 fatalities, including 12,000 civilians killed in direct attacks.

More than 23,000 fatalities were reported in 2019, making it the second most lethal year of the war so far. Apart from this, thousands more civilians have died from preventable causes, including malnutrition, disease and poor health all caused because of war and the weakening of institutions in Yemen. About 80% of the population - 24 million people - need humanitarian assistance and protection, and there is limited humanitarian help provided right now.

The United Nations has warned that the death toll from the coronavirus pandemic could "exceed the combined toll of war, disease, and hunger over the last five years."

The UN also issued a desperate plea for financial aid saying its operations in the country, including vital health services, were severely underfunded. The war has displaced more than 3.65 million from their homes - creating a large refugee crisis.

Recent Developments

The conflict in Yemen continues today, various efforts by the UN and other organisations to negotiate with the Yemeni government and Houthi rebels have broken down, and ceasefire

agreements have been violated. Additionally, Another thing that has made the situation in Yemen more difficult is that, because of all the fighting and unrest, it became a place for extreme groups like Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State to base themselves and grow stronger. The groups have carried out attacks in the south of the country. The coronavirus pandemic has only exacerbated the country's problems further with no clear solution in sight.



The Geneva Convention

The distinctive emblems defined in the Geneva Conventions are the red cross or the red crescent on a white background. In order to retain their protective status in wartime, these emblems may not be used either in peace or war except to indicate or to protect the medical personnel, establishments and material protected by the Conventions. (National Societies may, in accordance with their national legislation, make use of the emblem for their other peacetime activities.) In wartime they must not use the emblem to signify that 'protection' is conferred by it, unless specifically authorised to do by their governments: in this way the sign of the red cross or red crescent is itself protected from abuse.

The first Geneva Convention ("for the Amelioration of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces and Field"), and

The second Geneva Convention ("for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea"), are similar, covering land and sea respectively. They embody the main idea which led to the founding of the Red Cross: if a member of the armed forces is wounded or sick, and therefore in no condition to take an active part in the hostilities, he is no longer part of the fighting force and becomes a vulnerable person in need of protection and care.

The main points of these two Conventions are:

- 1) The sick, wounded and shipwrecked must be cared for adequately.
- 2) Belligerents must treat members of the enemy force who are wounded, sick or shipwrecked as carefully as they would their own.
- 3) All efforts should be made to collect the dead quickly; to confirm death by medical examination; to identify bodies and protect them from robbery.
- 4) Medical equipment must not be intentionally destroyed, and medical establishments and vehicles must not be attacked, damaged or prevented from operating even if, for the moment, they do not contain patients.

The third Geneva Convention ("Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War") covers members of the armed forces who fall into enemy hands. They are in the power of the enemy State, not of the individuals or troops who have captured them.

Prisoners of war MUST be:

- Treated humanely with respect for their persons and their honour.
- Enabled to inform their next of kin and the Central Prisoners of War Agency (ICRC, the International Red Cross) of their capture.
- Allowed to correspond regularly with relatives and to receive relief parcels.
- Allowed to keep their clothes, feeding utensils and personal effects.
- Supplied with adequate food and clothing.
- Provided with quarters not inferior to those of their captor's troops.
- Given the medical care their state of health demands.
- Paid for any work they do.
- Repatriated if certified seriously ill or wounded, (but they must not resume active military duties afterwards).

- Quickly released and repatriated when hostilities cease.

Prisoners of war must NOT be:

- Compelled to give any information other than their name, age, rank and service number.
- Deprived of money or valuables without a receipt (and these must be returned at the time of release).
- Given individual privileges other than for reasons of health, sex, age, military rank or professional qualifications.
- Held in close confinement except for breaches of the law, although their liberty can be restricted for security reasons.
- Compelled to do military work, nor work which is dangerous, unhealthy or degrading.

The fourth Geneva Convention ("Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War") covers all individuals "who do not belong to the armed forces, take no part in the hostilities and find themselves in the hands of the Enemy or an Occupying Power".

Protected civilians MUST be:

- Treated humanely at all times and protected against acts or threats of violence, insults and public curiosity.
- Entitled to respect for their honour, family rights, religious convictions and practices, and their manners and customs.
- Specially protected, for example in safety zones, if wounded, sick, old, children under 15, expectant mothers or mothers of children under 7.
- Enabled to exchange family news of a personal kind. - Helped to secure news of family members dispersed by the conflict
- Allowed to practise their religion with ministers of their own faith. Civilians who are interned have the same rights as prisoners of war. They may also ask to have their children interned with them, and wherever possible families should be housed together and provided with the facilities to continue normal family life. Wounded or sick civilians, civilian hospitals and staff, and hospital transport by land, sea or air must be specially respected and may be placed under protection of the red cross/crescent emblem.

Protected civilians must NOT be:

- Discriminated against because of race, religion or political opinion.
- Forced to give information.
- Used to shield military operations or make an area immune from military operations.
- Punished for an offence he or she has not personally committed.
- Women must not be indecently assaulted, raped, or forced into prostitution.

Suggested Moderated Caucus Topics

1. Discussing the various proxy conflicts in the middle east.
2. Evaluating Israel's actions in Palestine.
3. Discussing the involvement of rebel groups in middle eastern conflicts.
4. Evaluating the effectiveness of international organisations in maintaining

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