

**Kennesaw State University High School Model United Nations
General Assembly Plenary
March 23rd - 24th, 2018 Kennesaw, GA
Email: ksuhsmun2018@gmail.com**

Dear Delegates,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the thirty-third Annual Kennesaw State University High School Model United Nations conference. My name is *Kamran Sadiq*, and I have the pleasure of serving as the Director of General Assembly 3rd Committee. This is my third year on staff, having previously served in the roles of rapporteur and research assistant. I am a Geography major with a minor in Lusophone Studies. I am also a member of the Model Arab League and Model African Union teams at KSU.

Joining me at the dais this year is Assistant Director *Matthew Hunnicutt*. He is honored to have been given the opportunity to work with the High School Model United Nations program this year, especially having previously competed in high school MUN conferences himself. Matthew is also an International Affairs majors.

Serving as the Chair this year is *Sam Lam*. Sam is a Freshman at Kennesaw State University majoring in International Affairs with a minor in Japanese. While this will be her first year on staff, she is looking forward to meeting and working with you, and hopes that this will be a learning experience for all.

Throughout this conference, we hope that you as the delegate create new and unique ideas on how to solve these issues. The topics you will be discussing are ongoing issues that have advanced and mutated over the years; many of the solutions that the United Nations have created cannot fully solve the problems we face today. With that being said, we would like to see ideas discussed that have not been brought onto the United Nations floor before. We urge you to keep this in mind while conducting your research. We wish you all the best of luck in your research as well as throughout the conference.

Sincerely,

Your Dias

The General Assembly Plenary Committee will be considering the following agenda topics during the 2018 conference:

Topic I: Identifying and Combating the Roots of Violent Conflict

Topic II: Conflict Prevention in Failed States

Each Member State delegation within this committee is expected to submit a position paper which covers both of the agenda topics. A position paper is a short essay describing your Member State's history and position on the issues at hand. There are three key parts to any successful position paper: history, current status of the issue, and possible solutions for the future. Information for properly formatting the position papers, as well as valuable advice for writing a quality paper, can be found in the Delegate Preparation section of the HSMUN webpage (www.hsmun.hss.kennesaw.edu/). Delegates are reminded that papers should be no longer than two pages in length with titles in size 12 and text in size 10-12 Times New Roman. Citations should be footnoted in Chicago style formatting, such as those used inside this guide. Furthermore, plagiarism in an academic setting is unacceptable and will nullify any score for the paper in question. During the grading process, we will be utilizing the university's

plagiarism checker. Wikipedia is a wonderful place to begin researching, but we highly encourage the use of peer-reviewed academic articles or trusted media sources. The objective of a position paper is to present the diplomatic position of your Member State on both agenda topics as accurately as possible.

Committee History and Prerogative

Introduction

As the main body of the UN there are many responsibilities and duties tasked to the General Assembly. The General Assembly is responsible for setting the Agenda, allocating the UN budget between the different committees and councils, deciding on the amount of funding to be provided by each member state, conducting elections for the 10 non-permanent members of the Security Council, and convening Special Sessions and Summits. The Assembly may also take up or dissolve other tasks and missions at their discretion.

A highly important part of the Assembly's work focuses on the examination of human rights questions. The term "human rights" is mentioned seven times in the UN's founding Charter,¹ making the promotion and protection of human rights a key purpose and guiding principle of the Committee. In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights² brought human rights into the arena of international law. Since then, the Assembly, and the United Nations as a whole, have diligently endeavored to protect human rights in all political climates through the use of legal instruments and on-the-ground activities; all the while respecting state sovereignty. By directly addressing violations through constructive dialogue and meaningful action, the body hopes to eradicate violent conflict and international disputes, bringing to fruition the UN's goals for a more prosperous planet.

History

The United Nations (UN) is an international organization that was founded in 1945, just as WWII was coming to an end. The mission of the UN is to: save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind; reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small; establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained; and promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. The mission and work of the United Nations are guided by the purposes and principles stated in its founding Charter.³

Due to the powers vested in its Charter, along with its unique international character, the UN is able to take action on a multitude of issues challenging mankind in the 21st century, such as peace and security, climate change, sustainable development, human rights, disarmament, terrorism, humanitarian and health emergencies, gender equality, governance, food production, and more. While there are a wide variety of issues to be discussed amongst all 193 Member States, the General Assembly Plenary serves as the best vehicle for nations to have their voices heard in an all-encompassing and respectful forum. Through debate and consensus building, all member states and their delegations are able to participate in drafting resolutions concerning solutions to our most pressing problems while also addressing any dissent, in order to positively affect the lives of billions.

Topic I: Identifying and Combating the Roots of Violent Conflict

¹ "UN Charter (full text)." United Nations. Accessed December 12, 2017. <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/un-charter-full-text/>.

² "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." United Nations. Accessed December 12, 2017. <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.

³ "UN Charter (full text)." United Nations. Accessed December 12, 2017. <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/un-charter-full-text/>.

Introduction

In recent years, the number of terrorist attacks, religious and ethnic cleansings, and political uprisings have all risen as consequences of unidentified and misunderstood conflicts and their origins. While some conflicts and events began and remained violent, such as the Arab Spring, others like the Hong Kong Umbrella Protests⁴ walked a fine line between maintaining peace and order before graduating to widespread violence and chaos. The General Assembly, sometimes in partnership with the Security Council, is charged with finding reasonable and equitable solutions for all parties involved in an effort to reconcile differences and grievances before they become larger issues.

Topic History

Since its founding, the UN has striven to protect and enforce the basic rights and civil liberties of both individuals and member states. One way to do so is through effective mediation practices that will solve an issue before it escalates, or deescalate an ongoing conflict. In 2016, the Assembly voted in favor of the resolution, “strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution,”⁵ and reaffirmed the body’s original 2009 commitment,⁶ as well as the 1982 Manila Declaration,⁷ to mitigating crises through peaceful and diplomatic avenues. These declarations, along with other documents, have set the foundation for all future legislation pertaining to the advancement of the human condition, the preservation of peace and security, and the identification of catalysts causing violent conflicts.

Current Issues

Through the exploration of the origins of violent conflict, we find that one of the most deeply rooted causes of violent conflict is economic inequality within and between nations. More often than not, this inequality leads to civil wars, rebellions, and secessionist movements. Some examples include the civil war between Hutu and Tutsi in Burundi and Rwanda, armed insurgencies in the Democratic Republic of Congo, pro-independence referendums in Scotland and Bavaria, Germany,⁸ and the Occupy Movement in the United States.⁹ Violence resulting from economic instability can also be seen on a much larger scale when nations default on their debt to other countries or international organizations like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. A few examples of nations that

⁴ Griffiths, James. "Three years after Umbrella Movement, Hong Kongers back on the streets." CNN. October 01, 2017. Accessed December 12, 2017. <http://www.cnn.com/2017/10/01/asia/hong-kong-protest-umbrella/index.html>.

⁵ United Nations. General Assembly Plenary. *Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution*. 1-6. September 26, 2016. Accessed December 13, 2017. <https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/N1628366.pdf>.

⁶ United Nations. General Assembly Plenary. *Strengthening the role of mediation in the peaceful settlement of disputes, conflict prevention and resolution*. 1-5. July 28, 2011. Accessed December 13, 2017. https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/GARes_StrengtheningTheRoleOfMediation_ARES65283%28english%29_1.pdf.

⁷ United Nations. General Assembly Plenary. *Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes*. 1-3. November 15, 1982. Accessed December 13, 2017. https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/GARES_ManilaDeclaration_ARES3710%28english%29.pdf.

⁸ Noack, Rick. "Analysis | Europe has plenty of secessionist movements like Catalonia. Most don't want full independence, though." The Washington Post. October 11, 2017. Accessed December 09, 2017. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2017/10/11/europe-has-many-independence-movements-apart-from-catalonia-few-of-them-want-full-self-determination/?utm_term=.481c2728dfd0.

⁹ Willems, Rens. "When do inequalities cause conflict?" The Broker - Connecting worlds of knowledge. Accessed December 09, 2017. <http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/Articles/When-do-inequalities-cause-conflict>.

defaulted on their debt, leading to widespread protests, looting, and bank runs, are Greece, Argentina, and Mexico. In these cases, economic troubles hurt all citizens, rich and poor alike, not just a portion of the population.

Consequently, the political arena is affected greatly by economic turbulence, along with its own bastion of internal conflicts. One such conflict stemming from the French and Spanish colonial eras of Northwest Africa is between Morocco, Algeria, and Western Sahara. The origin of this conflict is well-known and well documented,¹⁰ which provides a better frame of reference for the Assembly when working to solve the issue. Looking back in history, Spain, like many European nations during the 1960's and 70's going through decolonization, left its colonial possession of Western Sahara and handed control of the territory to be split between Mauritania and Morocco. The Saharawi's rejected this demarcation of their land and fought desert guerilla wars against both Morocco and Mauritania in a fight for true independence. The guerrillas were eventually crushed by Moroccan forces and hundreds of thousands were forced into refugee camps in southwestern Algeria. The harboring of refugees led to the closing of the border between Morocco and Algeria and the complete dissolution of diplomatic relations¹¹ between the two countries. More recently, while some may say the Arab Spring began in Tunisia, a more convincing argument is that they actually began at the Gdeim Izik protest camp in Western Sahara in response to decades of mistreatment by Moroccan security forces. In recent years, the UN has appeared to have forgotten about the decades old conflict at the western edge of the Sahara, but recent efforts have pushed for greater awareness.

Geographic issues can also become diplomatic obstacles, as in the case of the former Soviet Republics of Central Asia. The Central Asian nations, once a beacon of cooperation and unity, have devolved into political squabbles and military posturing over energy and water resources since the collapse of the Soviet Union and their resource sharing system.¹² Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan were all rich in energy while Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were wealthy in water from their high-altitude reservoirs in the Tien Shan mountains. In recent years all of the nations have developed a lack of water and energy, worsening the situation for the populace. They consistently face a lack of food throughout the year and must rely on dried cow dung and an ever-decreasing amount of firewood to keep their stoves burning in the winter. With political instability, widespread economic hardship, environmental degradation, and the conflicts in Afghanistan edging closer to their borders, the Central Asian republics could be the next group of nations on the path to war and failed statehood.

Another key root cause of violent conflict is linguistic autonomy. Throughout human history, oppressors, conquerors, and rulers have all maintained their power through the implementation of linguistic control, forcing the conquered or minority group to use the language of the more powerful group. While the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities,¹³ adopted by the General Assembly in 1992, states that all children, immigrants, and minority groups have the right to use their native language, many states still have much progress to make before reaching and maintaining that goal. In more recent times, examples of linguistic violence and legislation can be seen through the subjugation of Basque during the Spanish dictatorship, Chinese and Dutch in urban Indonesia, and Kurdish throughout the Middle East.

Conclusion

The role of the General Assembly when identifying and combating violent conflicts is twofold. First, it must evaluate the nature of conflicts and their origins, with the help of its fellow committees and individual member

¹⁰ United Nations. General Assembly Plenary. *Resolutions adopted on the reports of the Fourth Committee*. 59-60. Accessed December 14, 2017. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/218/35/IMG/NR021835.pdf?OpenElement>.

¹¹ Finan, Khadija. "Global Policy Forum." *Western Sahara Impasse*. January 2006. Accessed December 12, 2017. <https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/208/39906.html>.

¹² Qobil, Rustam. "Will Central Asia fight over water?" *BBC News*. October 25, 2016. Accessed December 09, 2017. <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-37755985>.

¹³ OHCHR | Declaration on Minorities. Accessed December 12, 2017. <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/Minorities.aspx>.

states, in order to create a tailor-made solution for the affected nation and/or people. Second, it must empower nations to solve their own crises, but also delegate aid and support through such branches of the UN as UNICEF and the World Food Program when needed.

Committee Directive

There are many challenges that are involved when creating solutions for this topic. Both developed and developing nations can succumb to internal and external violent conflicts. In order to increase awareness about major root causes of violent conflicts and the effects they can have on a society, the committee would look favorably upon resolutions which contain or address the following:

- Ensuring the basic needs of populations currently in violent conflicts are met.
- Providing relief aid in any and all forms to nations during and post-conflict.
- How have nationalism, tribalism, and globalism created or exacerbated violent conflicts around the world?
- In what ways can the UN body come together while using already established organizations in order to enact change?

Topic II: Conflict Prevention in Failed States

Introduction

There are a few clear markers of what makes a country a failed state,¹⁴ although the term itself and its consequent descriptors are subject to debate. Many of these definers include things such as Internationally Displaced Persons (IDPs) or refugees, a decrease in the national economy, failing infrastructure, a declining education system or no education system at all, a non-existent or corrupt judicial and legal system, and the lack of a strong, central government. The most detrimental aspect of being a failed state is the increased likelihood that the area will either fall back into conflict or that it will fall into the hands of a regional terrorist group, if it hasn't done so already. There are many examples of "failed states," including: Syria, Libya, Venezuela, Eritrea, and North Korea.

Topic History

Failed states are those that can no longer perform the majority of basic functions such as schooling, national security, or transparent governance, usually due to tumultuous violence, distant and despotic leaders, or external conflict. This leaves nations and people extraordinarily vulnerable. Populations fall prey to terrorist organizations and other non-state actors, sometimes requiring neighboring states or the United Nations to intervene in order to prevent humanitarian disaster. However, states fail not only because of internal factors. Foreign governments can also knowingly destabilize a state by fueling ethnic warfare or supporting rebel forces, causing it to collapse. There have been many examples throughout history of nations succumbing to many of the aforementioned problems, such as Somalia, Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Syria.

Current Situation

One of the biggest fears throughout the Middle East and North African (MENA) region today is of internal conflicts spilling over into neighboring countries and territories. A *New York Times* article hinted several years ago that 14 new countries could be created in the MENA region due to ongoing conflicts and political apathy.¹⁵ While somewhat alarmist, it does bring up the possibility of further devolution and secession in the area if current nations

¹⁴ "Fragility, Instability, and the Failure of States." Council on Foreign Relations. Accessed December 10, 2018. <https://www.cfr.org/report/fragility-instability-and-failure-states>.

¹⁵ "How 5 Countries Could Become 14." The New York Times. September 28, 2013. Accessed December 11, 2017. <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/09/29/sunday-review/how-5-countries-could-become-14.html>.

are allowed to fail and their conflicts spill across borders. One strategy employed by the UN and independent nations in the region has been containment. If conflicts can't be prevented, at least keep them contained in specific areas, especially when non-state actors such as terrorist organizations are involved.

Another of the current ways to prevent and mitigate conflicts is through peacebuilding. The traditional methods of peacebuilding focus on providing aid, most notably financial, to help the war-torn countries return back to some sort of normalcy. With this solution, however, there are numerous loopholes; many of these countries receiving financial aid have a history of corruption. These funds are provided to these countries with the intention to provide short-term help to the war-torn nation. Many failed states are initially, or due to societal collapse become, poor, making them more vulnerable to external events, such as disputes, famine, disease, and the displacement of citizens. The goal of providing this economic assistance is to sustain economic progress, political stability, and continuous peace, not only among the citizens, but between the failed state and the world. However, these funds are often misused by their recipient, most commonly the government. There is also the likelihood that the recipient will become too dependent on the funds and will use them as a long-lasting means of development, a trend that the United Nations Conference of Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has often condemned.¹⁶

The last notable approach is a complete overhaul of the nation's political and economic system by an outside power. Most commonly, this refers to removing the current leader and replacing them, whether by democratic means or by instillation from an outside force, presumably the United Nations or the United States. There are many things that can go wrong, which is why it is quickly being faded out. The majority of the countries currently being deemed "failed states" are in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Northern Africa. These areas often have anti-Western sentiments, making it very difficult for Western nations, such as the United States, to come into these areas and install democratic institutions or to easily welcome a leader that the United States has put into power. When this approach first came about, it was able to work because the failed state as a whole agreed that the country leader was inadequate. In today's world, however, very few people can distinguish which leader was unethical because they are influenced by many different means, such as religion, propaganda, as well as others. The likelihood that this approach will continue in the future is very slim.

Conclusion

With the ever-changing world we live in, traditional approaches aren't always the best option. In many of these failed states today, the current methods we use for peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and conflict resolution hardly ever unearth the hidden causes of conflict, which can often cause a relapse back into violent fighting and hostilities between conflicting groups. This often happens because the access to food, clean drinking water, necessary medical supplies, and other basic services were significantly destroyed or completely eradicated during the conflict.¹⁷ In order to achieve long-lasting peace and stability, the General Assembly, in tandem with the Security Council, needs to realize the weaknesses of the traditional approaches to peacebuilding and conflict prevention and adopt measures to promote better techniques in the ever-changing world we reside in today.

Committee Directive

Preventing further conflict in already failed states may appear to be an uphill battle for there are multiple issues to be addressed. Lasting peace and the reintroduction of a function society can only be built when people have no reason to fight. The committee would look favorably upon resolutions which contain or address the following:

- Methods to ensure inclusion of ethnic and cultural minorities in rebuilding local and national governments, organizations, and businesses

¹⁶ Least Developed Countries - Trade and Development Board. Accessed December 11, 2017. <http://unctad.org/en/pages/SGStatementArchive.aspx?ReferenceItemId=7791>.

¹⁷ Helman, Gerald B., and Steven R. Ratner. "Saving Failed States." *Foreign Policy*. June 15, 2010. Accessed December 09, 2017. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2010/06/15/saving-failed-states/>.

- Creating practices to increase transparency of international relationships
- Improved ways of preventing radicalization or radical sympathizers among the youth
- Ideas on how to ensure that these areas have access to the basic resources they need such as clean water, sustainable food, and adequate shelter

Research Directory and Advice

Below are listed resources to assist you in your research as you write your position papers and research for debate in committee. These include general resources for the General Assembly Committee as well as the two topics covered in this background guide. The following links are excellent areas for beginning your research regarding general topic information. This is far from the limit of good sources, and delegates are expected to research independently, especially with their own Member State policy. Also, it may be in your benefit to follow reputable news sources to gain the most up to date information on the General Assembly Committee.

I: Identifying and Combating the Roots of Violent Conflict

United Nations Peacebuilding Information

<http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/>

This resource explains what the United Nations peacebuilding program is about and what it does.

UN News Center

<http://www.un.org/News/>

This resource gives you the most in depth, pressing news from the UN, about the UN and the world

About Millennium Development Goals

<http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/index.htm>

The resource describes what the Millennium Development Goals are

II: Conflict Prevention in Failed States

Global Policy Forum

<https://www.globalpolicy.org/nations-a-states/failed-states.html>

This resource elaborates on many of the historic and current failed states and the effects their conflicts are having on their neighbors and regions

General Assembly of the United Nations

<http://www.un.org/en/ga/>

This link will send you to the homepage of the General Assembly with updates on the current agenda and legislation

Alliance for Peacebuilding

<http://www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org/>

This non-profit organization is responsible for advancing sustainable peace and security worldwide.