

SNISMUN 2023

Background Guide

United Nations Human Rights Council

Agenda

***Human Rights violations in post-conflict regions with special emphasis on the African continent***

Executive Board

***Alby Mathew Kurien***

***Shreya Karanth***

***Subbu S Reddy***

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## Letter From The EB

*Dear delegates,*

*Welcome to SNISMUN 2023! We deem it our utmost honor and privilege to serve as the executive board members of the UNHRC at SNISMUN 2023. A specialized organization within the United Nations system, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) works to advance and defend human rights across the globe. The UNHRC is made up of 47 member nations that were chosen by the UN General Assembly for staggered three-year terms, and it serves as a crucial pillar of the UN's human rights framework. Its main goal is to promote human rights via advocacy, collaboration, and discussion. The*

*Universal Periodic Review (UPR), which evaluates the human rights records of UN member states, is conducted by the UNHRC during its regular meetings in Geneva, Switzerland. During these sessions, the UNHRC considers a wide variety of human rights issues, makes resolutions, and conducts the UPR. Additionally, it establishes Special Procedures to look into particular cases of human rights abuses or general problems. The UNHRC is a crucial platform for promoting the global human rights agenda and holding nations responsible for their duties under international human rights law since its operations are governed by the principles of universality, impartiality, and non-selectivity.*

*The Executive Board has compiled this background guide to facilitate research and we expect delegates to understand that it is merely a document to explain what we expect from the committee and to serve as a basis and foundation for further research. Your research must go beyond the contents and categories of this background guide to ensure that the discourse in committee is both detailed and pertinent.*

*The conferences one attends, the acquaintances they make, the effort they put in and all the various bits of knowledge that they gain through each conference are all extremely prized possessions of every person that is or has been a part of the circuit. We hope you have an exhilarating experience, make the best of this conference, and walk away on day 2 with a large smile across your face.*

*As your executive board, we hope to create a safe and inclusive space for all. If you have any queries/concerns or require any assistance, please contact us at [mun@snis.edu.in](mailto:mun@snis.edu.in) and we will revert as soon as possible.*

*Chairperson - Alby Mathew Kurien  
Vice-Chairperson - Shreya Karanth*

## **Rules of Procedure**

Before delving into the explanation of the rules of procedure by which we are required to conduct ourselves over the course of the two days that this conference shall last, we would like delegates to understand that the rules of procedure at every model UN

conference vary to an extent because executive board members have a certain degree of liberty in altering these rules, which is influenced by their own past experiences.

For this conference, we shall be adhering to the UNA-USA format of Model UN in general, while deviating from it where we deem it necessary to facilitate a higher level of debate and a better experience as a whole. Therefore, please note that it is with regard to the rules we intend to follow for this conference that this background guide has been written. We would also request that the delegates understand that there are certain technicalities with regard to the rules of procedure that we have willingly omitted to make comprehension of the rules of procedure easier, but will be explained during the proceedings of the committee. However, if any delegate finds any issues with the rules of procedure we have decided to follow, we encourage them to approach us and clarify their concerns at any point before or during the conference.

## **General**

- **Model UN:** The concept of Model UN is essentially to simulate the proceedings of the United Nations in which participants assume the role of representatives of nations. However, you will find that recently, the activity has come to include simulations of bodies and organizations that are not necessarily a part of the UN.
- **The Country:** The country you have been allocated is the delegate of whom you are taken to be and is the one you shall represent during this conference. Delegates are expected to represent their country's perspective and opinions of any discussion during the conference. However, it must also be noted that in some committees, delegates might represent organizations or individuals.
- **The Committee:** The committee is the organization or group that the delegates are representing their respective nations at. The committee delegates are a part that influences the powers and authority they have at their disposal as well as the type

of issues that they may deliberate upon and the members of each committee. To gain an understanding of your respective committee, it is advisable to examine its mandate. In this case, we are simulating a council of the United Nations General Assembly, the mandate of which may be found in Chapter IV of the United Nations Charter.

- The Agenda: The agenda simply refers to an issue that the committee has gathered to deliberate upon. While some committees may have two agendas to choose from, in this particular case, the committee shall only have one agenda it shall consider.
- The Executive Board: The executive board is in essence a moderating body tasked with overseeing the proceedings of the committee. Typically in the United Nations, the executive board is elected from the members of the committee itself, however, in most Model UN conferences, they are predetermined and have the additional task of evaluating the delegates.

### **Proceedings in Committee**

- Points: Points may be raised by delegates to address a personal requirement (through points of personal privilege), clarify queries regarding the rules of procedure (through points of parliamentary inquiry), question other delegates (through points of information) and point out factual or logical inaccuracies made by other delegates (through points of order).
- Motions: They may be raised by delegates and are voted upon by the committee to initiate all formal proceedings and influence the medium by which debate is conducted. For instance, motions are used when delegates wish to begin a formal session or to discuss a certain issue through a moderated caucus.

- Roll Call and Voting Stance: Roll call is essentially a process by which each individual nation is called out, following which the voting stance of the respective delegate is recorded. Delegates have two options during roll call ('present' and 'present and voting'), the latter implying that the delegate is discarding their right to abstain from substantive voting.
- The General Speakers List: The general speaker's list (GSL) is introduced by a motion and serves the purpose of beginning formal debate. An infinite number of speakers may be added to the list (with repetitions) and is typically used to summarize the stance of each delegate's nation upon the agenda. It may be used to make statements on any matter the delegate chooses to address. The committee shall revert to the GSL at the end of every caucus.
- Moderated Caucuses: Moderated caucuses are distinguished from general speakers list (GSL) speeches in the sense that they aim to address a particular aspect of the agenda with a predetermined number of speakers and are moderated by the executive board. While they possess the freedom to choose otherwise, delegates are encouraged to adhere to the discussion of the determined topic for the respective moderated caucus.
- Unmoderated Caucuses: During unmoderated caucuses, delegates are allowed to freely interact with the rest of their committee and are not mediated by the executive board. These caucuses are typically utilized to make decisions regarding the direction of the committee and to collaborate on documentation that delegates wish to submit such as working papers.
- Drafting A Resolution: Passing a resolution that serves as a set of reasonable solutions to the agenda is the primary objective of the conference. Resolutions must first be submitted as working papers, discussed by the committee as a

whole, and later introduced as a draft resolution, at which point it may be amended based on concerns raised by the committee. Resolutions are expected to be a result of collaboration amongst delegates which may be done in groups referred to as blocs, which typically do not exceed three per committee.

- **Voting:** Voting throughout the conference is either procedural or substantive. Procedural voting implies decisions that affect actions that influence debate, such as voting on motions. Such voting is compulsory. However, substantive voting is conducted to decide the passing of any documentation that the committee produces and is optional. However, if delegates give up their right to abstain (by choosing the voting stance, 'present and voting' during roll call'), they are obligated to vote.
- **Crisis:** Crisis are simulations within Model UN conferences wherein a hypothetical situation that threatens international peace or security in one form or the other is presented to the delegates who are expected to cooperate in finding a solution to the crisis they are faced with.
- **Press Conferences:** Press conferences are conducted by individuals taken to be members of the international press who are tasked with questioning the delegates in committee. The questions may range from matters of foreign policy, the agenda itself, or controversial actions by the respective nations of the delegates, with the intended purpose being to test the depth of the research done and the knowledge of the delegates

Note: The use of the Internet shall not be permitted during formal sessions of the committee. However, delegates may feel free to bring offline or printed copies of any material they wish to use.



## **Introduction to the Agenda**

A civil war, as defined by the International Committee of the Red Cross, is a situation of violence involving protracted armed confrontations between government forces and one or more organized armed groups themselves, arising on the territory of a state.

Being different from isolated acts of terrorism, riots, civil unrest, genocide, or a revolution, it emphasizes the existence of an organized, non-state armed group.

Civil wars break out due to several reasons. Political and economic factors were and still are some of the most driving factors that contribute. However, the long-held belief of unrest in diversity may not always apply. Irrespective of diversity, the level of social fragmentation plays a role of importance. Poverty, weak governance, and type of governance have been used in studies to show a correlation. Several theories based on greed, grievance, and opportunity have also come up in looking for causes of civil war.

Most such conflicts end with the military victory of one side, and barely 30% of the time, negotiations bear fruit.

## **The African Continent**

Being the world's second-largest and second-most-populous continent, Africa is home to a wide variety of people from several religions to hundreds of tribes. With 1.4 billion people as of 2021, it accounts for 18% of the human population. With the median age being 19.7 years, Africa's population is the youngest in the world. Home to nearly 30% of the world's mineral reserves including uranium, platinum, nickel, diamonds, gold, coal, and iron ore. Africa has played a key role in early international trade connecting Asia, Europe, and the Americas.



However, Africa has not yet harnessed its resources due to plugging issues such as corruption, inefficient investment, continuous conflicts, and governance problems.

## **Civil wars in Africa**

Over the last 40 years, nearly 20 African countries have experienced at least 1 civil war. 20% of Africa's population lives in conflict or violence-prone areas. Africa is treated as a doomed continent, perpetually stuck in an endless cycle of ethnic cleavages and violent tribal conflict.

Africa, more than most other continents, has been prone to violent clashes due to a few reasons listed below:

- Ethnic, and religious diversity
- Poverty
- Failed political institutions
- Heavy economic dependence on natural resources

Characteristics of African Civil Wars:

- caused more than one thousand deaths
- challenged the sovereignty of an internationally recognized state
- occurred within the recognized boundaries of that state
- involved the state as one of the principal combatants
- included rebels with the ability to mount an organized opposition
- involved parties concerned with the prospect of living together in the same political unit after the end of the war

## **Notable Cases**

### **Mozambican civil war-**

The Mozambican Civil War was a 15-year conflict that occurred between May 30, 1977, and October 4, 1992, in the southern African country of Mozambique. Although ostensibly an internal civil war, the conflict was in fact, a proxy war between the Soviet Union which backed the Mozambican government, and the United States which supported the insurgents.

The war occurred two years after Mozambique officially gained its independence from Portugal.

The main belligerents were the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) led by President Samora Machel which controlled the central government and the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) led by André Matsangaissa.

It was estimated that one million people died during a 15-year conflict in a country which in 1990 had a population of 14 million.

### **Nigerian Civil war-**

Nigeria was established as a single colony by the United Kingdom in 1912. In 1960, it was officially declared an independent country, with the current borders and with a federal system, but it was still marked by a strong internal fragmentation.

The Nigerian Civil War, also known as the Biafra War (July 6, 1967 through January 13, 1970), was a political-ethnic armed conflict caused by the attempted secession of the provinces of the southeast of Nigeria, mostly populated by Igbo people, under the name of Biafra Republic.

The war lasted two and a half years, and included the support of powers and superpowers to the two warring sides, with arms shipping from France, South Africa and Portugal to the rebels of the south, and support of the USSR and Great Britain to the federal government. Most African governments also supported the latter.

It is estimated that between 500,000 and 2,000,000 people died, mostly of starvation.

### Algerian Civil War-

The Algerian Civil War, known in the country as the Black Decade, was a civil war fought between the Algerian government and various Islamist rebel groups from 26 December 1991 (following a coup negating an Islamist electoral victory) to 8 February 2002. The war began slowly, as it initially appeared the government had successfully crushed the Islamist movement, but armed groups emerged to declare jihad and by 1994, violence had reached such a level that it appeared the government might not be able to withstand it. By 1996-97, it had become clear that the Islamist resistance had lost its popular support, although fighting continued for several years after.

### Ongoing Clashes

#### South Sudan-

An armed conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, rival factions of the military government of Sudan, began on 15 April 2023, with the fighting concentrated around the capital city of Khartoum and the Darfur region.

A dictatorial regime under Omar Al-Bashir prevailed in Sudan which used both the military and RSF to crush rebel forces in Darfur. People's pressure forced him to step down, following which the army took over.

The army promised a transition to democracy but it's being delayed forever due to the underlying rivalry between these 2 forces. Though they were on the same side for years, the RSF has grown powerful and has been acting independently lately. Its leader, Dagalo, known as Hemedti, has political ambitions.

Both the army and the RSF have been accused of committing human rights violations.

#### Ethiopia-

A situation of conflict has arisen between the federal government of Ethiopia and the Tigray region authorities. More recently, this conflict in Ethiopia, after ending a two-decade-old border dispute with Eritrea, has once again caused a crisis in this African country.

Eritrea, formerly part of Ethiopia, separated from Ethiopia in 1991. The war between 1998 and 2000 and the border in Eritrea and Ethiopia remained tense until 2018.

Abi Ahmed was elected to the post of Prime Minister in 2018 and signed a peace deal to end the border dispute with Eritrea. After the implementation of this peace agreement, Abi Ahmad was awarded the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize. But then the conflict started after Ahmed became Prime Minister.

Abi Ahmed, who belongs to the Oroma community, was accused by local leaders of the Tigray community that the Tigray community under the leadership of Abi Ahmed was being harassed by military officials and bureaucrats. The original inhabitants of Tigray are considered to be the fighting community of Ethiopia and 60% of senior military positions are dominated by the Tigray community. Abi Ahmed was committed to bringing this figure to 25%.

Along with this, various international agencies have accused Abi Ahmad of imposing an internet shutdown to curtail press freedom in Ethiopia and curbing personal rights.

#### Central African Republic-

Since gaining independence in 1960, CAR has experienced decades of violence and instability, including six coups. Since the 2003 coup carried out by François Bozizé, much of CAR, especially the northern areas, has been controlled by rebels.

Following several coups, CAR has plunged into a chaotic state of violence and a humanitarian crisis. Since the outbreak of renewed conflict in 2013, thousands of people have been killed and the number of refugees has reached 750,000, the majority of whom have fled to neighboring Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo, while an additional 500,000 have been internally displaced.

In early 2023, CPC rebels launched a new wave of attacks with improved weaponry against the government, raising fears of a return to intense fighting.

Further, Mali, Somalia, and Libya are also under the stress of clashes and violence.

### **Questions A Resolution Must Answer**

1. How can the international community assist post-conflict nations in rebuilding their institutions and infrastructure while guaranteeing that human rights are preserved and protected?
2. What part does the international community play in helping war-torn nations address the underlying causes of human rights abuses and establish lasting peace and stability?
3. How can nations strike a balance between the necessity of holding those responsible for previous violations of human rights accountable and the requirement for societal cohesiveness in the wake of conflict?
4. What controls exist to make sure that foreign operations in post-conflict areas respect the sovereignty of the afflicted nations and are motivated by their own needs and priorities?
5. How can nations help this process while maintaining security, and what steps may be taken to guarantee that humanitarian aid reaches the most needy communities in post-conflict regions?

6. What international assistance is available for capacity-building in this area? How can nations in post-conflict zones develop their legal and judicial systems to ensure fair trials for individuals accused of violating human rights?
7. What tactics may nations use to encourage national healing processes and transitional justice that involve all facets of society, including victims and former combatants?
8. What cross-border issues relating to human rights breaches in post-conflict regions can governments resolve through cooperation with regional organizations, neighboring states, and international organizations?
9. What part do political will and national leadership play in fostering accountability and upholding human rights in post-conflict environments, and how can the international community help?
10. How can nations take advantage of the knowledge and assets of local and international civil society organizations to track, document, and promote accountability in post-conflict regions?

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