

Boston College High School  
Model UN Conference  
XXXIV



## 1947: The Partition of India



**Chair:** Himnish Jindal

**Co-Chair:** Jayden Goncalves

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## Letter from the Chair

Hey Delegates,

Welcome to BCHMUN 34! My name's Himnish Jindal and I'm excited to be your chair for the Security Council's committee on the partition of India.

To give a brief introduction of myself, I'm a senior at BC High and live in Quincy, Massachusetts. Whether it is debating with other delegates, collaborating to create working papers, or presenting resolutions, I have loved every aspect of Model United Nations since I started doing it in the fourth grade. I always enjoy going to conferences where I can meet new people and explore new places. Outside of Model UN, I enjoy being an attorney on the Mock Trial team and leading the South Asian Representation Association here at BC High. In addition, I love taekwondo and tennis, as well as spending plenty of time with my friends and family. With that being said, I am eager to meet all of you at the conference and to see what you can do. Whether this is your first time coming to a Model UN conference or if you have been to many conferences before, we hope to make this a memorable experience for you all!

This background guide is intended to help you prepare for the conference by providing useful information on the topic to serve as a basis for your research. That being said, I expect that you will all thoroughly and thoughtfully do independent research to supplement this information you have been given. Striving to do this will ensure that everyone, including you, has the best experience possible at this conference by being knowledgeable and able to discuss the topic at hand. I am looking forward to seeing you all well-prepared, ready to give some amazing speeches and willing to collaborate with your fellow delegates.

I look forward to meeting you all in March and having an awesome conference with you all. If you have any questions, or would simply like to introduce yourself, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Best,

**Himnish Jindal '26**

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## Letter from the Co-Chair

Greetings Delegates,

My name is Jayden Goncalves, and I am honored and excited to welcome you to the BC High Model United Nations Conference as your co-chair. It is a privilege to serve in this role and to work alongside such dedicated staff members and motivated delegates. I am especially looking forward to engaging with all of you as we navigate this committee's complex and thought-provoking topic together.

I am a senior at BC High and have been involved in Model UN for four years, serving as a delegate, chair, and now co-chair. Model UN has been one of the most formative experiences of my high school career, strengthening my leadership, public speaking, and critical thinking skills while teaching me the importance of diplomacy, collaboration, and respectful debate. Each conference has pushed me to grow both academically and personally, and has played a major role in shaping the leader I am today.

Outside of the classroom, I am deeply interested in leadership, service, and civic engagement, and I continuously seek opportunities that challenge me to grow and give back. These values guide how I approach Model UN, not only as an academic exercise, but as a space for meaningful dialogue, mutual respect, and collective problem-solving.

I am truly excited to see the ideas, energy, and diplomacy that each of you will bring to committee. On behalf of the entire staff, I encourage you to come prepared, participate fully, and take advantage of everything this conference has to offer. Most importantly, enjoy the experience.

Best,

**Jayden Goncalves '26**

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## **Introduction to the Committee**

In 1947 the United Nations Security Council faced an unprecedented crisis in South Asia. British India was divided into the Dominion of India and the Dominion of Pakistan by the Indian Independence Act which was sent in motion in 1947 in July, this act then dissolving the British Raj. Within weeks, mass communal violence and population transfers across the new borders triggered a humanitarian emergency. Millions of Hindus and Sikhs fled from the newly created Pakistan into India, while Muslims fled in the opposite direction. The Security Council has been granted the powers, under Article 24 of the UN Charter, which gives it “primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security”. Delegates acting as Council members will have the ability to investigate the crisis, recommend or enforce ceasefires, authorize peacekeepers or observers, and coordinate humanitarian relief. The Council’s task is to halt the violence, protect refugees and civilians on both sides, and help lay the foundations for stability in the new states of India and Pakistan.

## **Background on the Current Situation**

For nearly two centuries Britain ruled most of India, imposing direct colonial administration after the 1857 rebellions. In the early 20th century, Indian nationalist movements emerged: the Indian National Congress (largely Hindu leadership) and the All-India Muslim League (led by Muhammad Ali Jinnah) both demanded greater self-government. After World War II, Britain evidently was financially exhausted and was determined to transfer power. However, Congress and the League disagreed bitterly on the shape of independence. Congress leaders (Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel) wanted a secular, unified dominion, while Jinnah insisted on a separate Muslim-majority state. In 1946 Jinnah called “Direct Action,” sparking pogroms and riots in Calcutta (Kolkata) and spreading to Bombay, Delhi and Punjab. These communal clashes killed thousands and convinced British authorities that partition was the only way to avoid civil war.

On the second of June 1947, Britain’s last Viceroy, Lord Louis Mountbatten, announced the plan to divide British India into two independent Dominions: a Hindu-majority India and a Muslim-majority Pakistan (including East Bengal). The UK Parliament passed the Indian Independence Act in July 1947, specifying 15 August 1947 as the date of independence for both new states. A Boundary Commission (chaired by Sir Cyril Radcliffe) drew new provincial lines. Two large provinces – Punjab and Bengal – were partitioned along religious majorities. Other territories (the North-West Frontier and Sindh, and many princely states like Kashmir and Hyderabad) still remained disputed or undecided. Leaders on both sides negotiated hurriedly, but mutual mistrust and local passions made agreement extremely fragile.

By August 1947, long simmering communal tensions exploded. Hindus and Sikhs in what became Pakistan (especially West Punjab and Sindh) faced violent attacks; Muslims in what

became India (especially East Punjab and West Bengal) were attacked in revenge. Estimates put the human lives lost at roughly a million and well over 10 to 14 million displaced. Trains and convoys of refugees were ambushed; entire villages were massacred. In the Punjab alone, over 200,000 people were murdered even after formal independence. The princely state of Kashmir (with a Muslim majority but a Hindu maharaja) became an additional flashpoint, as did other former princely states. In August, British troops withdrew, and the maintenance of law and order was suddenly handed over to the local armies and troops that were overstretched and often unable to protect fleeing civilians on all sides.



## **Current Situation**

In the weeks after the 15 of August, South Asia is convulsed by humanitarian chaos and political upheaval. Border posts between India and Pakistan are crowded with millions of refugees, desperately seeking food, shelter and family members. Refugee camps in Delhi, Lahore, Karachi and elsewhere are overflowing. Monsoon rains and outbreaks of cholera and malaria are spreading disease among refugees. Both the Indian and Pakistani governments are overwhelmed: new ministers and armies are struggling to assert control while local militias continue communal attacks. The exact border in Punjab and Bengal (the Radcliffe Line) was announced only days before independence, leaving many communities uncertain of which nation they belong to. Princely states are still deciding allegiances. For example, Kashmir's ruler has not clearly acceded yet, raising the specter of further conflict.

Politically, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's new Indian government is working to establish authority and secular rule in India. Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan's Pakistani government is likewise building institutions and addressing grievances of Pakistan's Muslim refugees. Both governments claim sovereignty over newly defined territories but accuse each other of failing to prevent attacks on minorities. The violence has sparked international alarm: even though this crisis originated as a colonial partition, it now threatens wider instability in Asia. News of the bloodshed has prompted appeals to the United Nations from concerned states. In this emergency session, the Security Council must consider measures to stop the killings, open safe corridors for refugees, and coordinate relief aid. Delegates should note that the UN had earlier formed a short-lived Commission for India and Pakistan in January 1948 (Resolution 39) to investigate complaints, a sign that the international community is prepared to intervene if invited or directed

by the Council. For now, the greatest needs are immediate peacekeeping in key border regions and humanitarian assistance for millions of displaced people.

## **Questions to Consider**

- ❖ How can the Security Council help end the communal massacres and ensure a ceasefire or calm along the India–Pakistan border? What tools (diplomacy, mediation, public statements) are available?
- ❖ What steps can the UN take to protect and provide for refugees and displaced persons? Should the Council authorize an international relief mission or expand Red Cross/NGO operations? How to ensure camps and safe passages are neutral and secure?
- ❖ Would it be feasible to deploy a UN peacekeeping or observer force to tense areas (e.g. Punjab crossings or communal hot spots)? What mandates, rules of engagement, and guarantees would be needed for such an operation?
- ❖ What long-term political solutions could stabilize India and Pakistan? For example, how should outstanding issues be handled – the location of disputed boundaries, the future of princely states (like Kashmir), and the rights of minorities in each new country?
- ❖ How should the Security Council balance respect for the sovereignty of the new dominions with its responsibility to maintain peace? Are there precedents (or UN principles) for intervening in a recently independent state?
- ❖ How can economic or development aid, legal protections for refugees, and cooperation on public health (e.g. fighting epidemics) be coordinated by the UN and the new governments? What roles might UNICEF, WHO, or later UN agencies play after 1947?

## **Positions**

- **Dominion of India**
- **Dominion of Pakistan**
- **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**
- **United States of America**
- **Republic of China**
- **French Republic**
- **Union of Soviet Socialist Republics**
- **Argentine Republic**
- **Kingdom of Belgium**
- **Dominion of Canada**
- **Republic of Columbia**
- **Syrian Republic**
- **Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic**
- **Kingdom of Afghanistan**
- **Dominion of Ceylon**
- **Kingdom of Nepal**
- **Kingdom of Bhutan**
- **Union of Burma**
- **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**
- **Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan**

- **Kingdom of Iraq**
- **Union of South Africa**
- **Republic of Turkey**
- **Dominion of New Zealand**
- **Kingdom of Egypt**

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