

KENTUCKY UNITED NATIONS ASSEMBLY 2024

SECURITY COUNCIL ISSUES

At KUNA, the Security Council will address **3 Issues** pertaining to international security in a specialized debate format. This year's issues are as follows:

- **Biological Warfare and Weaponry**
- **Human Rights Violations**
- **Humanitarian Crisis: Displacement and Economic Insecurity**

Each issue includes a resource guide with the following sections:

- **Background on Issue**
Summary and background information on the issue
- **Conflicts**
Summary of ongoing or recently concluded conflicts associated with the issue
- **Questions to Address**
Guiding questions/problems to address in position papers and resolutions
- **Sources**
Links to research, articles, and other resources on the issue

All Security Council members - both Middle School and High School - will prepare and submit a **Position Paper** stating the position of their country on each of these 3 issues prior to KUNA. You must submit a position paper, or your country risks losing its vote during Security Council debate.

Position Papers are submitted using the link below (NOT on your delegation's registration form), and are due by the registration deadline for your Assembly:

www.kyymca.org/kuna/security-council

The page above also includes links to the Security Council Resource Folder, which contains additional resources and templates for preparing for your role as a member of the Security Council.

At the Assembly, members of the Security Council will work together to draft, debate, and vote on Resolutions addressing each of the issues.

Our Security Council will also participate in a Crisis Scenario, which will be facilitated by the President of the Security Council President and YMCA Staff. Details regarding the scenario will be revealed at KUNA.

Biological Warfare and Weaponry

Author: Vivi Weaver, President of the Security Council | HS KUNA 1

BACKGROUND ON ISSUE:

Biological weaponry is defined as using a material that can spread disease, such as a toxic compound or organism, to attack populations and spread illness. This has been present in warfare for thousands of years, with Assyrians populating their enemy's wells with toxic compounds. Although this has been a concern for a long time, the recent development of high-level technology in this field has yielded frightening results.

Recent technological advancements have uncovered new, dangerous, and subtle methods of delivery. The development of technologies such as nanotechnology means that delivery can be virtually undiscoverable.

The UN possesses a Biological Weapons Convention sector, which seeks to encourage the destruction of existing biological weapons and halt technologies that seek to create new or advanced ones. This is nearly impossible, as some countries have closely tied biological weaponry research with their biological research, making it hard to differentiate research programs from one another.

In line with the United Nations Goal 3 of Good Health and Goal 16 regarding Peace, it is the responsibility of the Security Council to consider biological warfare as a serious threat to all member countries. In acknowledgment of this threat, the UN's Security Council must decide: is it a threat for member countries to possess biological weapons, and how will the advancement and creation of new biological weapons impact this danger?

Conflict 1: The United States and Russia's Possession of Smallpox

The United States and Russia are both known to possess some of the largest deposits of bioweapons in the world. Both of these nations maintain that the weapons are stored in high-security laboratories, but that does not prevent the usage of these weapons by these nations. Specifically, these two nations possess the only known vaults of smallpox in the world. Smallpox was officially eradicated in 1980 and no known cases have been reported since. Unfortunately, smallpox still exists in these vaults.

With the development of high-level gene-editing technology such as CRISPR, scientists from other nations worry that the United States or Russia could edit the virus to be extremely transmissible or more dangerous. Gene editing is becoming much more cost-effective and accessible, making it a more promising weapon. Other countries do not possess the virus, so working on a cure or secondary vaccine could be difficult and time-consuming, making a biological attack using smallpox extremely dangerous to these nations.

Conflict 2: China's Offensive Biological Weapon Program

The advancement of genetic editing has called into ethical question a lot of potential scientific advancements. One country that has been specifically under fire for ethical concerns regarding research advancement is the People's Republic of China. In 2021, the United States issued a statement against China regarding their use of biological material, essentially stating that they had blurred a line between genetic research and dangerous genetic editing that could be used in weaponry.

As of 2015, the People's Republic of China is known to operate 42 research facilities associated with the manufacturing of bioweapon technology. In 2017, Zhang Shibo of the People's Liberation Army noted that biological weapons have the capability of "specific ethnic genetic attacks". China has

continually noted that biological weapons remain immensely powerful and in the right hands, capable of a complete racial or ethnic cleansing. This may be perceived as a threat to international security and peace and therefore is the responsibility of the UN's Security Council to address.

Conflict 3: Development of Nanotechnology

Nanotechnology is a useful science that has recently begun advancing at unprecedented speeds. Frequently used for application in health science fields, nanotechnology can be dangerous in the wrong hands, due to its small size and numerous applications.

Nanoscience frequently researches unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs, which are 2-3 mm in size and have a variety of applications. They have often been used in medicine, for example, China is said to use them in targeting tumors, but they are likely being used for far more. Due to their small size, they are undetectable in many situations. Nanotechnology could also make it possible to isolate only the dangerous parts of biological weapons, which would make these weapons unrecognizable to the immune system. Nanotechnology can be dangerous, and due to its low cost, high availability, and lack of regulation, it is urgent that regulations are put in place to protect international security.

Many countries utilize nanotechnology, but the US, China, Japan, and South Korea are known for breaking barriers in the field. Nanotechnology is not necessarily a threat, but scientists are turning to its uses in biological warfare, making it necessary to discover the intention of the countries using this technology.

QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN RESOLUTIONS

1. Does your country possess biological weaponry?
2. Does your country encourage the use of biological weaponry?
3. Does your country have allies who possess biological weaponry?
4. Does your country have the capacity to edit or manufacture new biological weapons?
5. What is your country's stance on the editing of existing diseases to make them suitable for warfare?
6. Is your country involved in nanoscience research, and if so, what contexts are they applying it in?

SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

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<https://www.usmcu.edu/Outreach/Marine-Corps-University-Press/MCU-Journal/JAMS-vol-14-no-1/Future-Bioterror-and-Biowarfare-Threats/>

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Security Council | Issue 2

Human Rights Violations

Author: Anya Sharma, President of the Security Council | HS KUNA 2

BACKGROUND ON ISSUE:

Despite the UN and its member countries pledging a dedication to Human Rights, as a part of the founding charter of the UN, human rights violations continue to plague our global community. Innocent people are left without food or shelter. People are taken from their families and are forced to watch as their homes are destroyed. In the past year, there has been a steep rise in conflict-related civilian deaths, over a 50% increase. The United Nations was founded as an organization for peace in the name of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. The human rights violations being perpetrated globally are in direct violation of United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, and the UN as a whole.

While the Security Council constantly meets to deliberate on issues of human rights, the impact remains lacking. The UN Security Council has recently been meeting about the Israel-Palestine conflict, calling on Israel to “end the unlawful killings” happening in the West Bank. However, the response has been minimal. The Security Council has recently adopted a resolution on the Sudanese transition. While the UN remains dedicated to human rights, peace efforts must be made on all sides of every issue.

Outside of the Security Council, the UN Human Rights Council matches the legislative efforts of the Security Council and remains dedicated to peace in the global community. The council is dedicated to shining a spotlight on countries of concern, promoting accountability for governments and actors that violate and abuse human rights, and addressing key thematic human rights challenges. Additionally, while the Security Council focuses on legislative efforts, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, centers on field efforts and reporting.

The United Nations’ stance on Human Rights is sourced from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was created by the Commission for Human Rights with notable members Eleanor Roosevelt and René Cassin. The final declaration was adopted by the UN General Assembly as UN Resolution 217 A (III) on 10 December 1948, following World War Two. Additionally, the United Nations subscribes to the entire International Bill of Human Rights. The IBHR is made of three components: The Universal Declaration, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. The latter two stand as legally binding contacts between the signatory countries.

The Security Council can deliver certain punishments in response to human rights violations perpetrated by countries in our global community. The power is given to the Security Council via the UN Charter. The UN Security Council is able to investigate, mediate, dispatch a mission, appoint special envoys, dispatch a peacekeeping force, and issue a ceasefire directive. It is also able to establish travel bans, economic sanctions, arms embargoes, and more.

Conflict 1: Uyghur Genocide in China

This conflict began in 2014 when the Chinese government, under the administration of Chinese Communist Party, incarcerated more than an estimated one million Turkic Muslims in internment camps, without any legal process preceding the placement. The entire genocide is embedded within

the Xinjiang conflict. The initial tension between the Uyghur group and the Chinese government dates back to 1884, but the first physical attacks happened in the 1930s when both the Uyghur group and the Chinese government laid claim to the Xinjiang region. The fighting was originally put to rest with the establishment of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in 1955. However tensions began to flare when the autonomous region lost its status during China's Great Leap Forward and the region became important to the government due to Soviet involvement. The tensions between the groups have remained high, with many Uyghur separatist movements sparking anger within the country. In 2010, China began to move towards the idea of a monocultural society with a single "state-race". In 2014, the government launched the "Strike Hard Campaign Against Violent Terrorism" campaign in direct response to the Uyghur population within the Xinjiang conflict.

The Xinjiang internment camps, the official name being vocational education and training centers, are operated by the government of Xinjiang and the Chinese Communist Party Provincial Standing Committee. Human Rights Watch says that they have been used to indoctrinate Uyghurs and other Muslims since 2017 as part of a "people's war on terror". Innocent people are forcibly interned and separated from their families. In 2021, CNN reported "When the police planned to raid a Uyghur village, they would sometimes arrange for the entire village to gather for a meeting with their chief so that the police could show up and arrest everyone, while on other occasions the police would go door-to-door with rifles and pull all the residents from their homes overnight. Once the police had arrested people, they would interrogate and beat every man, woman, and child over age 14 "until they kneel on the floor crying". Within the camps, the existence of which already serve as human rights violations, there have been reports of forced labor, torture, forced sterilizations and contraception, brainwashing, medical experiments, and organized mass rape and sexual torture. As a whole, multiple gross human rights violations have been perpetrated against the ethnic group.

In August 2018, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination decried the "broad definition of terrorism and vague references to extremism" used by Chinese legislation, noting that there were numerous reports of detention of large numbers of ethnic Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities on the "pretext of countering terrorism". Adrian Zenz, a researcher focused on the Xinjiang internment camps, reported many of the human rights violations to the UN. In July 2020, Zenz wrote that an estimated total of 1.8 million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities had been detained in "the largest incarceration of an ethno-religious minority since the Holocaust". He argued that the Chinese Government was engaging in policies in violation of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Following the UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights report on the Xinjiang internment, 51 UN member countries have issued a joint declaration condemning the Chinese government's crimes against humanity committed against Uyghurs and other Turkic communities, and calling on Beijing to end its systematic human rights abuses in the Xinjiang region.

Conflict 2: Human Rights in Venezuela

Following the collapse of its traditional currency and massive amounts of hyperinflation, the political climate within the country gave way to many human rights violations. Many people within the country are facing a lack of economic and social rights at the hands of the Venezuelan government, namely President Nicolas Maduro. Maduro has been widely condemned for overseeing one of the worst human rights crises in the country's history. A major part of this is the aggressive response to the public calling for change. A majority of the population experiences severe food insecurity and are unable to access adequate healthcare. This struck as reasoning behind political protests about the lack of government aid. People were protesting for human rights, like access to water, and were met by security forces that responded with excessive force and other repressive and violent measures. The majority of individuals killed during protests died from gunshot wounds, with many resulting from the repression by Venezuelan authorities and assisting pro-government colectivos. The government

response to the protests led to many political prisoners being taken and many human rights violations being committed within the Venezuelan justice department. The justice department has struggled to meet the UN's decrees of human rights before. In November 2014, Venezuela appeared before the UN Committee Against Torture. On 28 November, the UNCAT expressed "alarm" due to the reports of abuse by Venezuelan authorities during the 2014 Venezuelan protests. According to the UN committee, allegations of torture included "beatings, burnings and electric shocks in efforts to obtain confessions". On 11 March 2015, the UN rapporteur on torture and other degrading treatment, Juan E. Méndez, stated "I concluded that the government violated the rights of prisoners", and the Maduro government did not comply "with the obligation to investigate, prosecute and punish all acts of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment". On 4 July 2019, the UN reported that the Venezuelan government used death squads to kill 5,287 people in 2018 and another 1,569 through mid-May 2019. According to Human Rights Watch almost 18,000 people have been killed by security forces in Venezuela since 2016 for "resistance to authority". UN' investigators reported on 16 September 2020 that Nicolás Maduro and other high-ranking officers ordered the systematic killing and torture of critics, violating human rights.

As a whole, the Venezuelan government has perpetrated many human rights violations. They have violated the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, of which they are a signatory, specifically Articles 18 and 19. The country has also violated the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, of which they are also a signatory. Additionally the government committed over 8,200 extrajudicial killings between the years of 2015 and 2017. The UN lost access in 2022 to detention centers where political prisoners are held, but many more violations have been estimated.

In 2020, the UN Security Council imposed sanctions on individuals involved in human rights violations and corruption in Venezuela. The sanctions targeted high-level officials who were responsible for the repression of political opposition and the abuse of human rights in the country. The sanctions included asset freezes, travel bans, and arms embargoes, aimed at holding those responsible accountable for their actions. The sanctions have put pressure on the Venezuelan government to improve the human rights situation in the country and to address the ongoing political crisis.

Conflict 3: Tigray Civil War in Ethiopia

Abiy Ahmed Ali was elected as prime minister of Ethiopia in 2018, making a landmark change in Ethiopian political history. Preceding Ali, the Tigray people of Ethiopia have been the dominant political force of Ethiopia for many years. The Prime Minister was also able to solve the decades long conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, freeing both countries from the political stalemate hurting both countries economic and physical futures. Abiy promised early in his premiership to heal broken trust between the country's ethnic groups and began to roll back restrictions on certain political freedoms. However, in 2020, tensions between the various ethnic groups within Ethiopia began to rise. The Tigray People Liberation Front, in anger at the extension of Abiy's prime ministership, held its own private elections, causing anger within the Ethiopian community. The TPLF are the main group of the northern region of Ethiopia. On November 4, 2020, Abiy accused Tigrayan troops of attacking a federal military camp and ordered Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) troops north. This began the fighting between the TPLF and the Ethiopian government. In response to the conflict, the Ethiopian government launched a campaign of ethnic cleansing against the Tigray group and the TPLF. Both sides of the conflict perpetrated many human rights violations against the other. Hospitals, homes, schools, and businesses were looted and destroyed. Rampant physical and sexual abuse was perpetrated by both sides to the damage of all civilians. There were "deeply distressing reports of sexual and gender-based violence, extrajudicial killings, widespread destruction and looting of public and private property by all parties" according to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Additionally, the Ethiopian government had the assistance of Eritrean military forces. In March 2021, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights announced a joint probe with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to investigate alleged abuses and rights violations in Tigray.

Following multiple failed attempts of negotiation of a settlement between the parties, a ceasefire was agreed upon on November 2, 2022, and signed in Pretoria, South Africa.

From the start of the conflict, 2.3 million children have been cut off from desperately needed aid and humanitarian assistance. The UN and UNICEF have worked to provide aid and food to those within the conflict area. Several UN member countries have imposed sanctions against Ethiopia.

Overall, many human rights violations have been committed in the area and the global community must come together to protect human rights and ensure repetitions of these atrocities do not occur.

QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN RESOLUTIONS:

1. What has your country done to prevent human rights violations within its own borders?
2. How has your country responded to human rights violations of other countries?
3. What is your country's position on human rights violations happening now (Russia-Ukraine War, Israel-Palestine, etc.) ?
4. What has led to human rights violations within your country? What has been done to fix that?
5. What relations does your country have with countries violating human rights?

SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

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<https://www.amnesty.org/en/>

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Humanitarian Crisis: Displacement and Economic Insecurity

Author: Sophia Vowels, President of the Security Council | HS KUNA 3

BACKGROUND ON ISSUE:

The United Nations approaches humanitarian crises with a dedicated commitment to preserving human rights, alleviating suffering, and fostering stability on a global scale. Guided by humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence, the UN endeavors to prioritize human welfare, provide assistance without discrimination, avoid political affiliations, and maintain operational autonomy in its response efforts. Additionally, the concept of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) underlines the international community's duty to shield populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity, with the UN playing a central role in mobilizing collective action for prevention and response. Aligned with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the organization addresses the root causes of crises through goals such as Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-being, Quality Education, Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. Various UN agencies, including OCHA, UNICEF, UNHCR, WHO, and WFP, contribute specialized expertise and resources to address specific aspects of humanitarian crises. However, challenges persist, particularly in the face of evolving conflict complexities, necessitating innovative and adaptive approaches. The UN's evolving strategy increasingly emphasizes prevention, preparedness, and engagement with diverse actors, including non-state entities, to ensure inclusive and collaborative humanitarian action. In summary, the UN's general opinion on humanitarian crises underscores a commitment to timeless principles while embracing flexibility and innovation in responding to the dynamic nature of global challenges.

Conflict 1: Humanitarian Crisis and Displacement in Yemen

The ongoing humanitarian crisis in Yemen, marked by widespread displacement and suffering, demands urgent attention from the United Nations Security Council. Yemen has faced a protracted conflict since 2014, when Houthi insurgents took control of the capital of Yemen, Sana'a. In January 2015, Yemen's President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi and his government resigned. Beginning in March 2015, a coalition of Gulf states led by Saudi Arabia led a campaign of economic isolation and launched air strikes against the Houthi insurgents, with U.S. support. This conflict has resulted in severe consequences for the civilian population, including displacement, food insecurity, and a collapsing healthcare system.

The fighting between the Houthi rebels and the coalition that backs Yemen's recognized government subsided in 2023, however, the Houthis have attacked ships crossing the Red Sea in response to the war in Israel multiple times. There has been hope for a negotiated solution as the Houthi and Saudi Arabia have negotiated. However, these discussions have resulted in little progress and are frequented with violence. Millions of Yemenis have been forced to flee their homes due to violence and airstrikes. The UN estimates that 21.6 million people require aid, including 11 million children. The displacement crisis has strained resources and exacerbated the vulnerability of the affected population. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that around 4 million people are internally displaced, with countless others seeking refuge in neighboring countries.

Humanitarian aid efforts face significant challenges due to the ongoing conflict, impeding the

delivery of essential supplies, including food, water, and medical assistance. The blockade and restrictions on imports have contributed to severe shortages, pushing the country to the brink of famine. It is estimated that nearly 17 million people are currently facing acute food insecurity.

Despite numerous resolutions and diplomatic efforts, the conflict persists, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis. The Security Council must address the root causes of the conflict, promote dialogue among conflicting parties, and ensure the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid to alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people.

Conflict 2: War in Israel

The United Nations passed Resolution 181 in 1947, known as the Partition Plan, which sought to divide Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. The State of Israel was created in May of 1948, sparking the first Arab-Israeli War. That war ended a year later with a victory for Israel, resulting in the displacement of 750,000 Palestinians, and the territory was divided into three parts: the State of Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip. In the following decades, the two nations have had tense relations, punctuated by violence and war.

Disagreements flared up among the Palestinians when the Hamas group won the Palestinian Authority's parliamentary elections in 2006. This gave Hamas control of the Gaza Strip, a small piece of land on the Mediterranean Sea that borders Egypt to the south. The United States and European Union, among other nations and groups, did not acknowledge Hamas' victory, as the group has been considered a terrorist organization since the late 1990s. As Hamas gained control, there were outbreaks of violence between Hamas and Fatah, the previous longtime majority parties. From 2006 to 2011, failed peace talks and violent confrontations persisted between the two groups until Fatah entered into a unity government with Hamas in 2014.

In October 2023, Hamas launched rockets into Israel and stormed several Israeli towns. Hamas killed over 1,300 Israelis, injured 3,300, and took hundreds hostage. The attack took Israel by surprise and they quickly declared war against Hamas, followed by an order from the IDF defense minister to carry out a complete siege of Gaza.

Gaza, a territory of about 139 square miles (360 square kilometers), faced a severe humanitarian crisis even before the current hostilities due to a sixteen-year blockade by Israel. Approximately 95 percent of the population lacked access to clean water, over half depended on international assistance, and about 80 percent were considered refugees under international law, making Palestinians the largest stateless community globally.

Following Hamas's attack, the situation in Gaza worsened, termed a "catastrophe" by UN Secretary-General António Guterres. As of November 10, Israel's retaliation, according to the Hamas-controlled Gaza health ministry, reportedly killed at least 11,070 people, with two-thirds being women and children, and around 2,650 others reported missing. Israel imposed a complete siege, cutting off essential supplies, and airstrikes have damaged infrastructure, including hospitals and residential areas. By November's second week, Gaza's health system collapsed, hospitals faced shortages, and Israeli strikes targeted al-Shifa Hospital. A dispute over fuel delivery has further strained the situation, with Israel linking aid to the release of hostages held by Hamas.

Conflict 3: Drought and Conflict in Ethiopia

The Tigray crisis in Ethiopia has unfolded as a complex and deeply troubling humanitarian situation. Beginning in November 2020, tensions between the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Ethiopian government escalated into a full-scale conflict, resulting in widespread displacement, violence, and reports of human rights abuses. The conflict has triggered a severe humanitarian

crisis, with millions of people in the Tigray region facing acute food shortages, inadequate healthcare, and a dire lack of basic services. The situation has been exacerbated as Ethiopia is heading into its six consecutive failed rainy season. This will likely prolong the drought, affecting 30 million people. The United Nations and various humanitarian organizations have expressed deep concern over the impact on civilians, with reports of atrocities, including mass killings and sexual violence. The Ethiopian government's responses to international calls for investigations and humanitarian access have added to the challenges of addressing the crisis, further complicating efforts to provide aid and assistance to those in need.

The Tigray crisis has not only led to a significant humanitarian emergency but also raised broader geopolitical concerns within the Horn of Africa. The conflict has strained relations between the Ethiopian government and the TPLF, contributing to a complex regional dynamic. Efforts by the international community to mediate and bring about a peaceful resolution face considerable obstacles. The situation remains fluid, with ongoing diplomatic and humanitarian initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of the crisis, ensuring accountability for human rights violations, and providing much-needed support to the affected population in Tigray.

The conflict has exacerbated the need for humanitarian aid in Ethiopia, with 10.2 million people facing acute malnutrition and requiring urgent humanitarian assistance. Over 20 million people experience some sort of food insecurity.

QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN RESOLUTIONS

1. Is your country currently experiencing a humanitarian crisis?
2. Is your country providing humanitarian aid to another country?
3. If your country is experiencing large-scale humanitarian crises, how are you responding to them?
4. What relief programs could your country implement?
5. Does your country accept refugees?
6. How is your country responding to the refugee crisis?

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