

# HOW TO WRITE A POSITION PAPER



## WHAT IS A POSITION PAPER?



A position paper is a piece of writing the Chairs of a committee assess to evaluate a) your ability to understand the topic presented; b) your country's stance on the issue and; c) the solutions you propose for the matter at hand.

The Republic of Uganda  
General Assembly 6  
Separatist State Movements  
Toni Elie Melhem



In the past decades, the whole world has encountered the enormous issue of what is called separatist state movements. Even though it frees many oppressed ethnicities, it has several and hazardous effects on the separated nations. While peaceful and harmless protestations are accepted and even encouraged, violence acts and crimes for a claimed "freedom", like what is happening in Uganda and its neighborhood, are strictly prohibited.

Ever since the Republic of Uganda has obtained its independence from the UK in 1964 we have been facing the problem of the SSMS (Separatist State Movements), especially with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), an unjustified rebel movement terrorizing northern Uganda and our neighbors. We have always been trying to find peace, particularly in the peace negotiations in 1993 and anytime it has been possible during the past years. However, this didn't prevent us from striking with an iron fist when these movements were hurting people.

On the other hand, on an international scale, Uganda has made many actions. First, it has participated in all the movements to stop the LRA, mostly with the African Union and the neighbors affected by this issue such as Congo, Central Africa, etc, as well as letting the international criminal court investigate in the issue. Secondly, it has always supported the liberation of South Sudan, a truly tyrannized nation, because, as our president said so well, *"...the unity formula was messed up with some people thinking they are more superior than others"*.

To conclude, the world cannot deal with the SSMS problem on a case-by-case basis, which makes things go worth, anymore. Today, we need to put a clear working plan for it. Since all the people have the right to self determine, they should be able to have someone to represent them and get their rights. First, this movement needs to be peaceful to be taken in to consideration; otherwise, it should be stopped, except if it's the government that starts the hostilities. It's not necessary for the protestants to have their own land in some cases that can be fixed by negotiating their rights with their present government. However, in other cases, it's a fatal result and the UN should help these nations to rise, build a stable country and give them complete rights gradually.



## WHAT IS IT WRITTEN ABOUT?



Each position paper should address the issue in the background guide. There are typically three sections you write your position paper on:

- 1) Background information
- 2) Arguments/supporting points
- 3) Proposed solutions

# WHERE TO START



There are many resources available to write a position paper. You should not be consolidating one source for all your information. For the sake of accuracy, visit **reliable** websites and make sure they are all relaying the same information. Additionally, the information should be **up-to-date** prior to the conference.

When in doubt, use the **CRAP** test.



## CRAP TEST



### Currency

- How recent is the information?
- How recently has the website been updated?
- Is it current enough for your topic?

### Reliability

- What kind of information is included in the resource?
- Is content of the resource primarily opinion? Is it balanced?
- Does the creator provide references or sources for data or quotations?

Taken from: <https://ccconline.libguides.com/c.php?g=242130&p=2185475>

## CRAP TEST



### Authority

- Who is the creator or author?
- What are the credentials? Can you find any information about the author's background?
- Who is the publisher or sponsor?
- Are they reputable?
- What is the publisher's interest (if any) in this information?
- Are there advertisements on the website? If so, are they clearly marked?

### Purpose/Point of View

- Is this fact or opinion? Does the author list sources or cite references?
- Is it biased? Does the author seem to be trying to push an agenda or particular side?
- Is the creator/author trying to sell you something? If so, is it clearly stated?

## SOURCES TO GET STARTED



1. “UN World Stats Pocketbook 2020” - this should be the first source you consolidate. It is up-to-date, reliable, and has information on ALL countries
  - a. Note: this includes environmental, economic, and social key facts
2. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/>
  - a. Gives you content-heavy information about a country, and easy to browse around! Definitely use this, it's reliable and useful
3. <https://www.un.org/en/our-work/documents>
  - a. Refer to this to see what past actions have been taken
4. <https://bestdelegate.com/research/>
  - a. Use this as an in-depth guide on how position papers are structured and what *kind* of research you should be doing





## Explore Countries

Search over 255 locations across the globe.

Try Argentina, Ghana, or Vietnam.

 

**Explore All Countries**



## SOURCES TO CONTINUE ON



1. <https://treaties.un.org/>
  - a. List of treaties within the United Nations
2. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>
  - a. You may want to refer to this when discussing past actions
3. <https://www.un.org/en/library/page/databases>
  - a. Really great for the following subjects on the right:

- Development
- Disarmament
- Economy and Finance
- International Law
- International Relations
- Peace and Security
- Social Affairs
- All subjects

## AFTER YOU HAVE RESEARCHED ON THE TOPIC



Refer to the background guide and use the information *most* relevant to your issue and relate it back to the guides. Always research about any questions asked to consider.

### Committee List

[United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund \(UNICEF\)](#)

The United Nations International Children's Fund's mission is to reach every child and ensure their well-being, no matter where they are in this world. There's no limit to the lengths UNICEF will go, the risks they will take or the depth of their commitment to save children's lives. By plane, boat or foot, they reach the poorest, most vulnerable children in the world's most inaccessible places, bringing them simple, life-saving essentials like vaccines and clean water.

**BACKGROUND GUIDES BELOW**

[Child Sex Trafficking](#)

[Children's Access To Education](#)



## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Your resolution paper typically begins with background knowledge on both the concerned topic and your country. It should include:

- History of your country on the topic
- Any events relating to your topic (that involve your country)
- Basic information about your country
- Relationship between other countries
- Your country's position in the United Nations (**note:** your own position does not equate to your country's position on the topic.)
- Body paragraph no. 1

## 2. ARGUMENTS/SUPPORTING POINTS



Traditionally within the four body paragraphs of a resolution, you will have the second and third paragraphs identifying the topic and the relevance it holds in your country. Additionally, you should include:

- Past actions your country has taken in response to the issue
- Arguments that support your country's position on the matter

The arguments and supporting points can be either one or two paragraphs.



### 3. PROPOSED SOLUTIONS



Lastly, you want to connect your proposed solutions to the arguments/supporting points. Again, relevancy is important in the position paper. Similarly to a resolution, the solutions should connect to the problems discussed in the position paper.

There are proposed solutions within the background guide, but try going beyond that. It was give you the upper hand during a conference creativity wise. Your position paper will not stand out if you reiterate old news. The key is being **creative** and being **relevant**.

## SAMPLE POSITION PAPER



### Human Rights Council: Venezuela

#### Overview

Venezuela, now known as the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela since 1999, consists of a continental mainland on the northern coast of South America, and many islands that fall in the Caribbean Sea. It neighbours Brazil, Guyana and Colombia, and has Caribbean neighbors of Trinidad, Barbados and Saint Vincent. Home to a diverse range of wildlife and a supplier of many natural resources, Venezuela is considered to be in the top 17 most megadiverse countries worldwide. The majority of the population speaks Spanish, and are Roman Catholics. Its government is a federal republic, and contains five branches including executive, legislative, judiciary, electoral, and citizen. There are two major political parties including the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), and the Communist Party of Venezuela (PCV). Its major industries include petroleum, construction materials, and iron ore mining. Venezuela as a mixed economy, with petroleum exportation accounting for about a third of the country's GDP.



## SAMPLE POSITION PAPER



### *Venezuela on Human Rights*

Having been under the leadership of both President Hugo Chávez and President Nicolás Maduro, the power of the executive branch of government has increased, leaving human rights to be diminished, and any individual who speaks up against it is punished. The shortage in medicine, medical supplies, and food have intensified, and the lack of response from the government has undermined Venezuelans basic human rights. There are many cases of raids in low-income communities, torture of protesters, and poor prison conditions. Quite frankly, Venezuela cannot survive without international assistance. The increase in violence in Venezuela stems from the same cause of violence elsewhere. Structural factors, systematic inequality and socioeconomic divides have left violence persistent. While many citizens' living standards are improving, those left in the shadows of the petroleum industries are increasingly excluded from benefiting from these social policies.

## SAMPLE POSITION PAPER



### *Treatment of Prisoners*

This economic struggle is reflected in the country's prison systems. The general crisis has had an enormous impact on the quality of life in prisons. Since 2015 Venezuela has been considered one of the most violent countries that is not at war. This has greatly affected the prison systems. The prison systems have terrible conditions, considering overpopulation and its violent nature. To gain control, the Ministry of Popular Power for Correctional Services introduced the "New Prison Regime" in 2013 to regain control of the prisons. This plan relies heavily on military discipline, and prohibits the use of weapons. Yet, it has not been implemented in all prisons. By law, rehabilitation of these convicted criminals revolved around work, access to little education, and access to medical assistance. However, the overcrowding precluded these rehabilitation efforts. Many cells that are built for only 36 inmates are now holding around 150. As crime rates increase, the number rapidly grows in response. Several prisoners who are in desperate need of medical assistance are being neglected due to the medical crisis in Venezuela. Ramon Muchacho, the mayor of Chacao, is trying to move inmates into larger penitentiaries, but the prison authorities won't take them. The entire prison system is a prime example of massive human rights violations.