

# BACKGROUND GUIDES



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# Letter from the DIAS

#Distinguished Delegates, It is with great pleasure to address you as members of the Third General Assembly (GA3) of the Wesgreen International School Model United Nations (WESMUN) 2026. This year, we convene under the title “Geopolitics Networking Control in Transnational Threats”. We are delighted to welcome you to this committee and look forward to offering you the opportunity to participate in stimulating and engaging discussions.

In light of the extensive social, cultural, and human rights challenges facing the world currently, the need for resilience has never been more urgent. As the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, Ga3 plays a crucial role in addressing global issues related to the protection of vulnerable groups such as indigenous tribes, people of colour, people in conflict-affected areas, women, and children, through international cooperation and collective responsibility.

Throughout this conference, the committee will explore the following pressing agendas:

- Combating Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery in Transnational Networks.
- Addressing Human Rights Violations Arising from Geopolitical Conflicts. As delegates, it is your responsibility not only to critically assess the challenges, but also propose and advocate for realistic solutions grounded in principles of international solidarity.

This background guide should support you in developing your understanding around the agenda topics and could come helpful as a reference to your research. However, we strongly urge you not to take it as your sole source of information, instead you should expand beyond it and explore the topics deeply and independently.

Above all, we implore you to look at this conference with open minds. True leadership and sustainable problem solving lies in the ability to adapt, collaborate, concede your own interests for the bigger picture, and think beyond the conventional and usual. As future leaders and diplomatic advisors, you have the valuable opportunity to introduce meaningful dialogue and promote cooperation and teamwork that leads to lasting change across generations.

We wish you the very best in your preparations and sincerely hope you enjoy this experience. Sincerely,

The Chairs of Ga3



# Introduction to committee

The Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, also known as the Social Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (often shortened to SOCHUM), is responsible for maintaining human rights, confronting humanitarian issues and social development, and improving the overall wellbeing of vulnerable societies internationally. Unlike bodies with enforcement powers such as the Security Council, Ga3 is unable to press binding sanctions. Instead, it focuses on inaugurating frameworks and international standards that guide member states in the committee. Ga3 often discusses issues such as humanitarian crises, refugee and asylum seekers protection, rights of women, welfare of children, and other vulnerable groups, indigenous rights, extremism, elimination of racism and xenophobia, and cultural preservation. It also discusses emerging concerns such as the impact of technology on human rights, modern forms of exploitation, and the humanitarian consequences of instability.

Ga3's work is unique as it involves constant discussions between universal moral principles and the differing political, cultural, and socioeconomic situations of member states. The committee does not have binding enforcement powers in the same way as the Security Council (UNSC), but its influence comes from its ability to build international consensus and generate global momentum around important human rights issues. Resolutions that are passed in the Ga3 are commonly used as a guide for national legislation, and influence international treaties or mechanisms that protect vulnerable individuals. Since every UN member state participates in the General Assembly, the committee acts as a platform that allows different perspectives to be voiced, and to be heard.



Agenda 1:  
Combating Human  
Trafficking and Modern  
Slavery in Transnational  
Networks.



# Introduction to the Agenda

## Historical context:

Human trafficking and modern slavery have existed in many forms throughout history, from ancient systems of forced labour to the transatlantic slave trade. Although the international community formally abolished slavery in the 19th and early 20th centuries, various new forms of exploitation have emerged with the rise of mass migration. The shift from traditional slavery to modern trafficking began to gain international attention in the late 20th century, when development in transportation and communication allowed for criminal networks to operate across borders with increased ease. The term 'modern slavery' grew more widely used as governments and international organisations began recognising that exploitation no longer occurred through what was once known as traditional ownership, but also through tactics that include coercion, deception, and abuse of vulnerability that allow minorities to be exploited and used in various ways. By the early 2000s' trafficking had become one of the fastest growing criminal industries, prompting renewed international efforts to understand and eliminate these networks.

A significant historical example of large scale human trafficking and slavery is the Transatlantic Slave Trade, which occurred throughout the 15th and 19th centuries. Throughout this period, millions of Africans were forcibly transported across continents by European powers in plantations and colonial economies in the Americas. This trade system persisted for over 400 years, inflicting immense human suffering on the Africans. The United Nations recognises the transatlantic slave trade as one of the most grievous violations of human dignity in history, as more than 15 million people were victims of this brutal system. It demonstrates how organised cross border exploitation existed long before modern forms of trafficking were formally implemented.



## **Current situation :**

Today, human trafficking and modern slavery remain widespread, affecting millions of victims worldwide.

Trafficking networks have become increasingly sophisticated, using online platforms, encrypted messaging, and social media to recruit and transport victims. They often come from communities affected by poverty, conflict, displacement, natural disasters, or lack of legal protection. Women and children remain disproportionately targeted, especially when it comes to sexual exploitation and domestic servitude, while men are often targeted for forced labour or dangerous industries.

Transnational crime groups maintain complex systems that include recruiters, transporters, document forgers, and corrupt officials, which makes the networks highly complex. Global crises, which includes armed conflicts, economic instability, and climate related displacement, have created a much larger pool of vulnerable individuals, simplifying the process for traffickers to operate. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic contributed largely to the increased online exploitation and further limited access to legal and social services, further isolating victims. Despite the increased awareness, prosecution rates remain concerningly low, and many victims remain unidentified, exemplifying the urgent need for improved prevention strategies.



## **Past UN actions:**

The United Nations has taken extensive measures to address human trafficking and modern slavery. One of the most significant milestones was the adoption of the Palermo Protocol in 2000, which provided a comprehensive definition of trafficking, established international standards for criminalisation, and emphasised victim protection. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) was designated as the guardian of the protocol, coordinating global efforts and monitoring states' implementation. Moreover, the General Assembly and Human Rights Council have adopted multiple resolutions aimed at strengthening law enforcement cooperation, promoting victim-centred solutions, and addressing trafficking in conflict zones. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has contributed critical research and conventions targeting forced labour, including the Forced Labour Protocol in 2014, which is a legally binding instrument that further strengthens the 1930 Forced Labour Convention by requiring member states to protect victims and punish perpetrators of forced labour, including human trafficking. Furthermore, the UN launched the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons in 2010, which helped further encourage states to implement counter trafficking solutions into their national policies. Despite these initiatives persistent gaps remain when it comes to enforcement and victim identification, which shows the importance of addressing this agenda within Ga3.



# Key Terms

- **Vulnerable populations:** Groups of people at risk of harm, injustice or exploitation due to being marginalised by the community or government.
- **Modern slavery:** The removal of the freedom of an individual for personal or commercial or criminal benefit.
- **labour exploitation:** The abuse of workers for profit including coerced labour, unfair wages, excessive work hours, seized legal documents, and a dangerous work environment.
- **Domestic servitude:** The exploitation of the victim in a private residence with little to no pay and relies on deception and control.
- **Debt bondage:** The victims are forced to work to repay a large debt and are usually treated with little to no rights.
- **Forced criminality:** Victims are forced and deceived into committing or engaging in crime by threat or deception.
- **Forced begging:** Victims are forced to beg for money or items where most of the profit is taken by the trafficker.
- **Child soldiering:** The use of minors by armed forces or groups in any way.



# Key Issues

- **Violations of human rights**

Modern slavery and human trafficking often involve stripping victims of their freedom of choice where they are tied back by debt, deception, or even threatened safety to the victim or/and their family. Their movements are restricted by their perpetrators whether it is the seizing of their travel documents –making it near impossible to escape– or the threatening of security which manipulates the victims to abide by the system. Victims are usually given unlivable wages, treated with little to no dignity, being forced to work for long hours in danger zones without regulation and in some cases including sex trafficking victims face psychological, physical and sexual abuse.

- **Exploitation of vulnerable groups**

Marginalised groups whether poverty-stricken or refugees who are seeking asylum or income and promised better opportunities to secure financial safety are taken advantage of and deceived into the system. Desperate in search of a better life they are persuaded into accepting extremely low income or far worse committing crimes such as drug trafficking, theft and much more. Vulnerable groups also include minors, being naive or in need to help their family financially, could easily be influenced into entering the workforce, a common example is panhandling which imposes many risks to the welfare of the child and strips away their childhood.



# Key Issues

- **Exploitation of labour**

Affecting 17.3 million people in the economic private sector reported by the ILO, exploitation of labour has been a major issue targeting children, populations in poverty, and people struggling with education; where they are forced to work in unsafe conditions, endlessly, being paid the minimum so the company could maximise its profits. A common example is the Democratic Republic of Congo which has reported one of the worst colonial human right abuses in Africa where 17.4% of children ages 5 to 14 are forced into child labour and some even working in mines. However, there is also a lack of complaint as the victims are heavily dependent on their traffickers.

- **Gender Inequality**

Women and girls make up an alarming 71% of modern slavery and 99% of sex trafficking victims rooted in societal gender discrimination where women in some regions lack rights to owning financial assets, accessing education, and are less considered when making legal policies and decisions; which puts them at a greater risk of trafficking and abuse. However just as gender inequality worsens trafficking, trafficking increases gender inequality where it forms stereotypes of exploitation of women, victims are pulled out of education early and they are more prone to sexual violence. Victims of sex trafficking suffer from STIs, unwanted pregnancies and mental health trauma.



# Major Parties

- **Developing countries:**

Many of the victims of human trafficking and modern day slavery originate from third world developing countries. They are often recruited, coerced, or abducted, often due to poverty, conflict, adverse conditions, desperation, or lack of education. Countries, especially in the african and asian continents; Nepal, India, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Myanmar, Myanmar, and burundi. These countries face the problem of developing infrastructure but more incessantly the absence of safeguarding measures against trafficking.

- **Transit countries:**

The next step is the transport and smuggling of victims through “transit” countries. The lenient border control combined with limited and inadequate coordination makes such countries “safe havens” for traffickers. States like Libya, turkey, Mexico, Thailand and Malaysia require strengthening of regional borders and cooperation with neighboring states to successfully disrupt trafficking across transnational networks

- **Independent organizations:**

NGO's play a vital role in combating trafficking forts hand on the ground whilst also spreading awareness about modern day slavery. They help break down the stigma around victims, provide rehabilitation services, help unite broken families and work firsthand with lawmakers to ensure stronger and community led solutions to a very complex issue. Organizations such as Antislavery international, Polaris and save the children with the data collected from their hotlines help identify tens of thousands of victims worldwide.



# Previous attempts to resolve the issue

- **The Palermo Protocol**

The protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons (the palermo protocol) of 2000 is the international legal framework to combat trafficking. It established a universally accepted definition of trafficking and called on countries to criminalize the practice, and adopt measures on prevention and victim protection. Whilst ratified by majority of countries, its effectiveness has been widely limited by uneven enforcement and differing national capabilities.

- **The forced Labour protocol established by the ILO in 2014**

It builds on the Forced Labour Convention of 1930 by putting stronger, binding obligations on states. It requires countries to prevent forced labour, protect victims, and ensure access to rehabilitation and compensation. The protocol has helped increase global recognition of forced Labour within supply chains, though implementation remains inconsistent, particularly in developing economies.

- **The forced Labour convention of 1930 by the ILO**

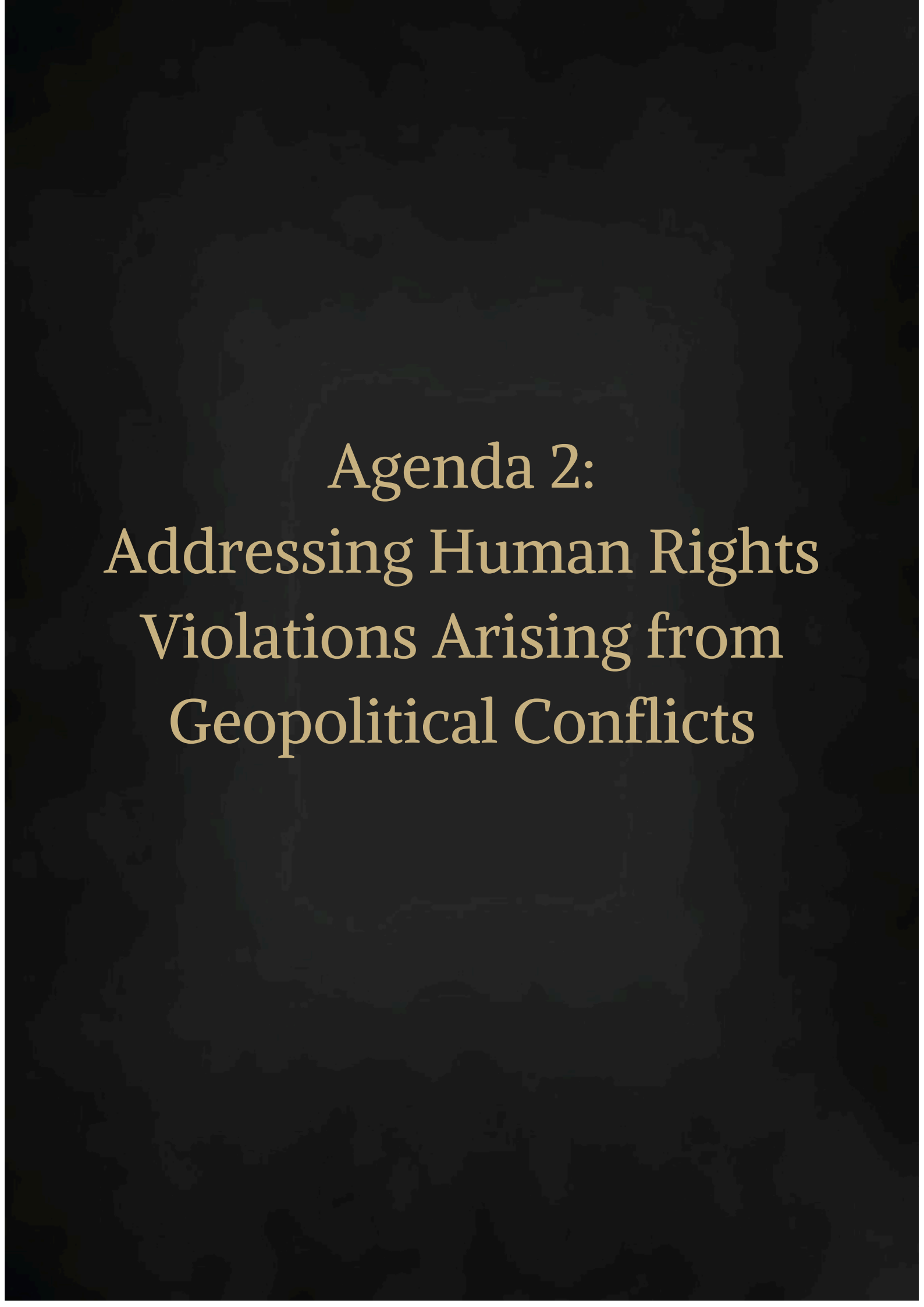
It is one of the earliest international agreements to combat forced labour and modern slavery. It requires countries to prevent the use of forced or compulsory labour in all its forms and to criminalize such practices. Whilst it formed the foundation for later frameworks, its impact has been limited by outdated policies and weak enforcement by countries, requiring later updates such as the 2014 Forced Labour Protocol.



# Questions a Resolution Must Answer:

- 1- What measures can countries and international organizations implement to prevent human trafficking and protect at risk nations?
- 2- How can victims' rights including access to rehabilitation, legal aid, and reintegration services be prioritized?
- 3- What frameworks and cross border cooperation solutions are necessary to effectively investigate, prosecute, and punish traffickers?
- 4- How can Member States, UN bodies, regional organizations, and NGOs coordinate more effectively to disrupt transnational trafficking networks?
- 5- What strategies can be employed to improve data collection, reporting, and public awareness on human trafficking and modern slavery?





## Agenda 2:

# Addressing Human Rights Violations Arising from Geopolitical Conflicts



# Introduction to the Agenda

## **Historical Context**

Human rights violations linked to the geopolitical conflicts have long shaped global history. Throughout the 20th century, major wars including the World Wars, the Cold War, decolonisation struggles, and regional conflicts all resulted in widespread civilian suffering. These events led to the creation of fundamental human rights instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Geneva Conventions which sought out to protect civilians during war and during political unrest' However the post-Cold War era highlighted that conflicts gradually progressed, turning more complex as regional rivalries intensified. Civilian populations increasingly found themselves at the centre of the conflict, facing threats such as ethnic cleansing, forced displacement, arbitrary detention, torture, and targeted attacks on essential infrastructure such as hospitals and schools. These patterns established the need for stronger international monitoring and humanitarian safeguards.



# Introduction to the Agenda

## **Current Situation**

In today's geopolitical landscape, human rights violations arising from conflict continue to be a burning issue. Modern wars often blur lines between state and non-state actors, making accountability more difficult and complicating the protection of civilians. Conflicts in several regions have resulted in mass displacement, with millions forced to flee across borders and leave their homes, or become internally displaced persons. Infrastructure destruction, such as the targeting of hospitals, schools, food supplies, and water reservoirs has created severe humanitarian emergencies. Misinformation, propaganda, media restrictions, and deliberate obstruction of humanitarian access further intensifies civilian suffering. Political polarisation at the international level can make coordinated responses extremely difficult, as states may prioritise strategic alliances over human rights commitments. Monitoring mechanisms often face very little access to conflict zones, and peacekeeping missions may be restricted by mandates or a lack of communication from the parties involved. As geopolitical tensions continue to grow, further fueled by competition for resources, ideological divides, and regional instability, civilians continue to bear the consequences of their states' decisions, often having their human rights stripped and their humanity reduced to a mere statistic.



# Introduction to the Agenda

## **Past UN Actions**

The establishment of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) strengthened the UN's capacity to document abuse and deploy fact-finding missions. The UN has also authorised multiple peacekeeping missions designed specifically in favour of protecting civilians and monitoring cease-fires. The Human Rights Council regularly forms commissions of inquiry or special rapporteurs to investigate any violations in specific regions. Moreover, the General Assembly has played an important role in condemning abuses and calling for ceasefires. The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) framework, endorsed in 2005, marked a substantial development by reiterating that states, and the international community, have a mutual accountability to prevent mass atrocities and support peace rather than incite violence. In spite of these efforts, political divisions within the Security Council and different national priorities often restrict the effectiveness of international action. Therefore, Ga3 continues to function as a critical platform to encourage constructive dialogue amongst member states.



# Key Terms

- **Discriminatory violence:** The act of cruelty towards a vulnerable group of people.
- **Arbitrary arrest:** The arrest or detention of an innocent individual without legal reasons.
- **Authoritarianism:** The focus of power on a leader or a specific group of people growing more powerful and requires absolute obedience from the population.
- **Sovereign equality:** The principle of people having equal rights within the states.
- **Ethnic cleansing:** The systematic removal of an ethnic, racial or religious group from an area and could be by mass displacement or mass killing.
- **Extrajudicial killing:** The killing of an individual usually by an official without a legal framework. I
- **DP (Internally Displaced Persons):** Displaced individuals or groups due to conflict fleeing their homes while remaining in their country's borders.



# Key Issues

- **Mass displacement:**

Mass displacement refers to the large-scale movement of people due to conflict, and as for 2022, 117 million people were displaced from their homeland globally. Refugees are forced to leave behind their education, jobs and properties putting them in economically and socially vulnerable positions. Even as refugees out of the conflict zone, many could fall into great danger in their host countries being very vulnerable, they could be victims of modern slavery, trafficking and racism.

- **Economic Collapse:**

Economic and service collapse in conflict zones arises from the destruction of infrastructure, trading halt and financial instability; this causes inflation as it gets harder to import products such as food, clothes and hygienic products which are essential in every community. Due to the instability of conflict zones investors are discouraged to invest and with less money and workers to support the businesses they are forced to shut down which affects people depending on the services or job opportunities. Armed conflicts also affect emergency services as more people are injured and many lose their lives saving others; less government funding also impacts these facilities.



# Key Issues

- **Gender based violence:**

Although conflict affects all civilians in proximity, gender based violence becomes more prevalent as it becomes more challenging to enforce law and order. In 2024 there were 4600 reported cases of gender based violence targeting women. This includes the abduction and trafficking of women and girls. This leads to lifelong trauma where it is extremely difficult to get out of the system as education and financial independency.

- **Recruitment of child soldiers:**

The recruitment of child soldiers is often due to coercion or manipulation where minors are told they would receive an income and if they do not comply it could put their family in danger. Some cases of recruitment include abduction of the child soldier which strips them from having a proper childhood, education and welfare. During and after combat many struggle with physical life changing injuries or even mental trauma including PTSD and shell shock due to witnessing and experiencing gruesome amounts of violence.



# Major Parties

- **Directly involved countries**

Many countries in geopolitical conflicts see nefarious human rights violations occurring on both sides. These violations often arise from political instability, indiscriminate shelling, and the use of guerilla warfare often from internal rebel militant groups. Nations like Syria, Yemen, Ukraine, Thailand. The problem arises with addressing and implementing monitoring, accountability systems, and cooperation.

- **Neighboring nations**

The countries closest to conflict zones experience a massive spillover effect. The influx of refugees combined with the security threat and economic strain face heavy pressure to firstly protect their own sovereignty whilst adequately addressing the needs of the refugees. The increased cost of rehabilitation and government pressure often leads to a stigma around refugees in these countries. Such nations like turkey, Jordan, Poland and Moldova have to procure a solution for a complex issue by providing humanitarian assistance, hosting displaced populations, and supporting their own sovereignty while balancing their own security and human rights obligations.

- **Independent organizations**

They play a critical role in documenting human rights abuses, advocating for victims, and providing humanitarian support. Human rights Watch, amnesty international , and the international rescue committee operate in conflict zones to monitor violations, raise global awareness, and assist civilians affected by geopolitical crises. They hold one of the most important missions, to provide boots on the ground documentation and feedback and critical stats.



# Previous attempts to resolve the issue

- **Universal periodic review**

This review requires all UN Member States to periodic evaluation of their human rights records, including actions during armed and geopolitical conflicts. countries receive recommendations and proposals related to civilian protection, treatment of detainees, freedom of expression, and accountability for violations. While the UPR promotes transparency and peer pressure, its non binding nature and reliance on state cooperation limit its properly needed enforcement

- **Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Monitoring & Reporting**

The OHCHR deploys field missions and publishes reports on violations such as illegal killings, forced displacement, and repression of political opinions during conflicts. These reports model UN resolutions, sanctions, debates, and international response. Despite their credibility, reports are often politically contested or ignored by offending states under the pretense of propaganda.

- **The International Criminal Court**

The ICC has pursued accountability for grave human rights violations arising from conflicts in situations such as Ukraine, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. It investigates war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide when national courts are unwilling or unable to act. However, the ICC faces limits, non cooperation, and challenges in arresting suspects, which reduce its overall effectiveness.



# Questions a Resolution Must Answer:

- How can the international community ensure accountability for human rights violations in geopolitical conflicts when state sovereignty and veto power obstruct enforcement mechanisms?
- What measures can be taken to strengthen the implementation and follow-up of UN Human Rights Council recommendations, including those arising from the Universal Periodic Review?
- How can independent fact finding missions and commissions of inquiry be granted safe and unhindered access to conflict zones despite political resistance from involved states?
- What mechanisms can be established to protect civilians, journalists, humanitarian workers, and human rights defenders during active geopolitical conflicts?
- How can evidence of human rights violations be effectively preserved and shared for use in international or domestic judicial proceedings?



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