

Silver Oaks Model United Nations, 2025

Background Guide



**UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

*Agenda: Addressing Discrimination Rooted In Racial Inequality and
Xenophobia, With An Emphasis on Genocide and The Status Of
Indigenous Populations.*

*Chairperson: Sarayu K
Vice Chairperson: Yoffi Nelluri*

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Letter From the Executive Board

Greetings, delegates! We feel honoured to welcome you all to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), Silver Oaks MUN (SOMUN), 2025. We are looking forward to working with you all in ensuring a fruitful debate. This MUN aims at giving you a better and more thorough insight upon the working and functioning of UNHRC. We have designed a Background Guide for you to start off your research process, and it will provide you with the guiding topics for your external research and background research on your country.

We urge all members of the committee to take the time to read the background guide and use it as a starting point for their research. The amount of time and quality that you, as delegates, invest in research shapes the committee's flow and direction. You are the representative of your allotted country, and it is our hope that you put in wholehearted efforts to research and comprehensively grasp all important facets of the diverse agenda.

We urge every delegate to come to the conference with an open mind, ready to meet and work with new people, and actively participate in the debate in the committee. Debate and argue solutions as well as problems and help form a thorough and effective resolution. The Executive Board will not interfere in the flow of debate unless required. Therefore, the onus to ensure that the committee does not stagnate lies on the delegates.

We will be hoping to see a lot of enthusiastic delegates. We hope to see some relevant solutions being discussed in committee, and also a lot of fun. Additionally, we hope to see a lot of discipline as well, regarding following the Rules of Procedure and adhering to foreign policy. We promise to make this a memorable and entertaining experience for each one of you.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with the Executive Board at any time prior to or during the conference in case you have any queries about the agenda or the rules of procedure. We are here to help you during the conference at all times. We request the delegates to not view this conference as a zero-sum-game. Model UN conferences are collaborative in nature rather than competitive and we would like to keep this spirit alive during our committee.

We look forward to seeing you and wish you the very best in your preparations

Contact: mun2025papers@gmail.com

Regards,

The Executive Board, UNHRC

Chairperson: Sarayu K

Vice Chairperson: Yoffi Nelluri

Position Paper

A position paper offers a concise summary of your country's viewpoint on the agenda being discussed. Your position paper should include a brief introduction followed by a comprehensive breakdown of your country's position on the topics that are being discussed by the committee. A good position paper will not only provide facts but also make proposals for resolutions.

For **SOMUN 2025, UNHRC**, you are expected to submit a position paper on the agenda: "Addressing Discrimination Rooted In Racial Inequality and Xenophobia, With An Emphasis on Genocide and The Status Of Indigenous Populations." Delegates who wish to be considered for an award must submit their papers without fail. Submitting a position paper is mandatory. It must be submitted before the deadline, and no late entries shall be entertained. Use of AI will result in demarcation.

The suggested guidelines are as follows:

1. Use single spacing in the Times New Roman Font, size 12.
2. Include both the emblem and the national flag of your assigned country in your position paper. The emblem should be placed on the top left corner of the document, and the national flag on the top right. Ensure that both symbols are present and clearly visible.
3. Give each separate idea or proposal its own paragraph, and use endnotes to show where you found your facts and statistics.
4. Be mindful of your country's foreign policy and stick to your interests.
5. Do not plagiarize content, or include the usage of generative AI. Position papers not meeting this criteria will not be considered, and you will be marked negatively.
6. A position paper is generally no more than 2 to 3 pages long, excluding your references. It is mandatory to cite your sources.
7. The Executive Board requests the use of the MLA format for your position paper.

The format below is provided below for your reference.

POSITION PAPER

Your Country

Committee Name

Agenda

Begin your position paper with a concise opening statement that highlights your country's stance on the topic. Clearly state your country's position and briefly explain the main arguments you will present in the paper.

Historical Background:

Provide a brief historical context or background information related to the topic. Highlight key events, relevant resolutions, or previous international agreements that are important for understanding your country's position. Discuss who the stakeholders are and why this is a problem worth discussing in the UNHRC. This section should demonstrate your knowledge of the issue and your country's perspective on it.

Country's Position:

In this section, outline your country's position on the topic. Clearly articulate your country's interests, concerns, and objectives related to the issue. How is it involved in the agenda? Support your position with specific reasons, facts, and references to international law or agreements. Address the main aspects of the topic and explain how your country's position aligns with or differs from other countries.

Proposed Solutions:

Offer concrete and practical solutions to address the issue at hand. Present specific policies, measures, or actions that your country believes will contribute to resolving the problem. Explain how these solutions align with your country's overall position and objectives. Consider the feasibility, effectiveness, and potential challenges of your proposed solutions.

Previous Actions and Contributions:

Highlight any previous actions, initiatives, or contributions your country has made in relation to the topic. Discuss any relevant treaties, agreements, or regional efforts your country has been involved in. Emphasize your country's commitment to addressing the issue and working towards a sustainable solution.

Conclusion:

Summarize your country's position, key arguments, and proposed solutions. Reiterate your commitment to engaging in constructive dialogue and finding a consensus-based solution that

benefits all parties involved. Offer to collaborate with other delegates and express openness to further discussions during the conference.

The deadline to submit the position papers is the 16th of October, 11:00 PM, 2025. Late submissions will not be accepted. The gmail ID to submit the documents is: mun2025papers@gmail.com. Please include in the subject: Name of your country, Position Paper. Do not attach the link of any google document. Position papers will be accepted only in PDF format. Kindly do not include any other attachments.

How This Guide Is Meant To Be Used:

The following pages intend to guide you with the nuances of the agenda as well as the Committee. The Guide chronologically touches upon all the different aspects that are relevant and will lead to fruitful debate in the Committee. It will provide you with a bird's eye view of the gist of the issue. However, it must be noted that the background guide only contains certain basic information which may form the basis for the debate and your research. This guide was made to provide you with an overview on the committee, as well as our style of conducting debate. It consists of readings from various sources and we have attempted to make it as comprehensive as possible, covering various angles and viewpoints so that you have a good idea about the concepts associated with the agenda. We cannot stress enough that you need to pursue your own sources, especially because the study guides will not cover your individual foreign policies, and foreign policy compliance is very important to us. It is very likely that we, in our limited knowledge, have also omitted some crucial insights, perspectives or initiatives that are really effective or could be implemented later on. This background guide cannot be used as a base of proof, as this guide is meant to be a reference only. It is not exhaustive by any means. We hope you use it as a catalyst for the starting point for your research, and that you do not let it hinder the much needed extensive external research required for your respective portfolio. Many of the sources used in this study guide are open-source. The reason we chose not to write it entirely ourselves was because we wanted to avoid a certain bias which may be too evident in the language that it is being written in. We have tried instead to bring a certain balance in the way we assign you readings, but then again, there may be a chance that it may be seen as favouring any one side. We would like to assure you that it is not done by intention, but merely the constraints of time and sources.

What and How to Research:

Conducting thorough research is absolutely pivotal for comprehending the complex ideologies of this particular scenario. Here are some steps to guide your research and give you an idea of our moderating style:

★ The following sources of information will be deemed credible during this conference:

1) Reuters

2) Reports published by any body/committee/affiliated body of the United Nations.

3) Statistics and data reported by certain credible NGOs or statistical organisations.

4) Any other source the Executive Board may deem admissible during committee including information provided by government reports and government-funded/affiliated agency reports/articles.

★ AI is not reliable. Any usage of it will result in immediate demarcation. Fair warning from the Executive Board: it is rather easy to identify AI-Generated content.

★ Hierarchy of evidence; evidence can be presented from a wide variety of sources but not all sources are treated as equal, Here's the hierarchy in which evidence is categorized:

Tier 1: Includes any publication, statement, resolution, or document released by any of a nation's official organs or committees, or by the United Nations. Any publication, statement, or document released by a UN member state in its own capacity, or any documentation published by the UN. The evidence falling in this tier is considered the most reliable during the simulation.

Tier 2: Includes: Any news article published by any official media source that is owned and controlled by a UN member state, Eg.: Xinhua News (China), Prasar Bharati (India), TASS (Russia) etcetera. The evidence falling in this tier is considered sufficiently reliable in case no other evidence from any Tier 1 source is available on that particular fact, event, or situation.

Tier 3: Includes: any publication from news sources of international reputation such as Reuters, The New York Times, Agence-France Presse, etcetera. The evidence falling under this tier is considered the least reliable for the purposes of this simulation. Yet, if no better source is available in a certain scenario, it may be considered.

★ Find the website for the foreign ministry of the country you have been assigned alongside the "Permanent Mission your country to the United Nations" website and search for a key term relating to the agenda. This should often give you statements from recent press

conferences or UN committee sessions that can act as valuable sources of information in forming a position.

- ★ The UN Charter plays an important role here. Keep a copy of this document in either PDF or physical format as this document, an official document made by the United Nations, contains useful information. It outlines the core principles of the UN and lays out the mandate of the six bodies that it undertakes. Take time to first research the mandates and functions of the committee you have been assigned, here, UNHRC.
- ★ Take sources from multiple stakeholders into consideration, as well as international viewpoints to establish a balanced understanding.
- ★ Pay attention to human rights reports, political development, and overall international diplomatic endeavours related to the region.
- ★ Cross-check facts from a multitude of sources to ensure utmost accuracy.
- ★ The Executive Board intends to follow the Rules of Procedures enacted in the UNA-USA format, with variations per the committee's needs.

Introduction to the Committee:

The Human Rights Council:

Human rights are inalienable entitlements established not by law, but by human birthright, and the history of human rights has been shaped by all major world events and the struggle for dignity, freedom, and equality everywhere. However, it was only with the signing of the Charter of the United Nations (1945), the subsequent establishment of the United Nations (UN) in the shadow of World War II, and the call to “reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights,” where human rights finally achieved formal, universal recognition.

The UN has remained committed to “promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all” through charter-based and treaty-based mechanisms. Charter-based mechanisms derive from the provisions of the Charter, most commonly as subsidiary bodies like the Human Rights Council. Treaty-based mechanisms are the human rights covenants and conventions, along with their respective treaty bodies, which take the force of law and monitor the implementation of the provisions of the treaties.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948), a treaty-based mechanism, was adopted by the General Assembly as a “common standard of achievement” for all peoples and countries to pursue the protection and promotion of human rights. After decades of standing alone, this cornerstone document was joined by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1976), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and its two Optional Protocols to comprise the International Bill of Rights. It was not just these documents which guided human rights in the UN system, but also the Commission on Human Rights, which manifested as “the main subsidiary organ of the United Nations dealing with human rights.”

The Commission had functioned for 60 years as the principal body concerned with the defense of human rights within the universal protection system. It was responsible for the creation of the aforementioned principal human rights treaties and the development of the non-conventional human rights protection mechanisms, including the 1503 complaint procedure and the special procedures (special rapporteurs, working groups, among others). This Commission was then dissolved and replaced by the United Nations Human Rights Council which was established in 2006 by the General Assembly’s Resolution 60/251.

MANDATE:

Recognising the need to preserve and build on the Commission's achievements and to redress its shortcomings, the HRC was created to ensure stronger system-wide coherence and preserve the value of human life "in larger freedom." The Council was charged with, inter alia, assuming the roles and responsibilities of the Commission, promoting the full implementation of human rights obligations, responding to human rights emergencies, undertaking a universal periodic review, and making recommendations to States and the General Assembly (GA). The Human Rights Council consists of different mechanisms and entities, as set out in the Council's 'Institution-building package' (Resolution 5/1) of 2007. These include the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a State-led mechanism that regularly assesses the human rights situations of all United Nations Member States, the Special Procedures, the Advisory Committee, the Complaint Procedure, HRC mandated investigations, open-ended intergovernmental working groups, as well as forums. Working within the bounds of this mandate is crucial in any simulation of the UNHRC. Here attached are the mandates of the UNCHR and UNHRC:

[Resolution 48/141](#)

[Resolution 60/251](#)

[Resolution 16/21](#)

[Resolution 5/1](#)

Introduction to the Agenda

Agenda: "Addressing Discrimination Rooted In Racial Inequality and Xenophobia, With An Emphasis on Genocide and The Status Of Indigenous Populations."

Discrimination and racism humiliate individuals and destroy communities. Although we've collectively taken strides in the field of addressing inequality, the fact remains that no country can claim to be free of racism, nor has any country comprehensively accounted for it in the past. Millions continue to suffer the legacies of colonialism, or the inhuman and criminal enslavement of generations of women, men and children of African descent. Millions continue to suffer the aftermath of ethnic cleansing. Millions of voices of the indigenous population have been silenced, and their culture sentenced to death.

In 2001, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action was adopted, aiming to put an end to injustice, both past and present, and putting victims first: whether Africans and people of African descent, Asians and people of Asian descent, Indigenous Peoples, migrants, refugees, Roma or

other ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious minorities. It acknowledged the impact of discrimination based both on race and gender, as well the impact of intersecting and multiple forms discrimination. The international community, for the first time, acknowledged that enslavement and the trade in enslaved persons were and are crimes against humanity, and that colonialism has fuelled racism that still exists today.

That being said, despite these historic breakthroughs, racism and discrimination remain pervasive and deeply entrenched worldwide. A critical shortage of comparable global equality data hinders policy-makers' ability to design and implement effective tools to combat such injustices. A continuum of harm, from verbal abuse (34% of global cases) to physical attacks (18%) to systematic discrimination (25%) emerges, with individual actions that are magnified by systems and structures. In one in every five cases, overlapping identities compound vulnerabilities and intensify discrimination: 60% of intersectional instances involve race, 33% religion, 28% gender, 20% disability and 18% age (Global outlook on racism and discrimination, UNESCO). Individuals emerge as the primary perpetrators, but institutional contexts play a significant role in perpetuating discrimination.

It is precisely the institutional and systemic element of the problem that we, the Executive Board, wish to shed light on through this Agenda. Polarised discourses, misinformation and disinformation contribute to fuel discrimination, undermining societal cohesion and economic progress. Today's situation emphasises the urgency of addressing discrimination at all levels, and the role that policy-makers and advocacy groups, who are the main audience, can play to progress toward equality. It emphasises the role that you, as delegates, can play to take a step closer towards equality through the UNHRC. The UNHRC is, and always has been, a platform to ensure holistic equivocacy for the most marginalised of communities. It can take legislation and shape policies a step closer to providing oppressed communities with adequate safeguards. It is our hope that as delegates in this conference, you operate on the belief that tackling systemic barriers requires more than legal reforms; it demands accountability, measurable progress, and cultural change. The task now lies on each one of you to navigate the tension between respecting cultural practices, when some may feel they clash with today's conception of morality. The Executive Board looks forward to witnessing how the delegates find a balance between respecting patriotic sentiments, as well as fostering inclusive growth.

Definitions:

The Executive Board is aware of the discourse surrounding the definitions of the terms used in this guide, and for uniformity, is requesting delegates to accept the following as the definitions of these terms for the purpose of this background guide:

Race: notions like race are difficult to grasp because they are social constructs rather than objective, verifiable facts. Genetic studies in the late 20th century have shown that humans are not biologically homogeneous and that there are no biogenetically distinct races. Since much of our legal worldview depends on understanding objectivity, the contrast between such objective and subjective realities is further exacerbated. The law of genocide puts four categories at the disposal of the courts, as previously mentioned: the national, ethnical, racial or religious group. However, the assignment of victims to one of the four groups doesn't indicate that these divisions exist objectively, but rather that the perpetrators assume they do. The legal classification is treated as a reality, although it actually originates in the perception of the perpetrator. Thus, rather than looking for an objective legal reality of 'race', the victim's imagined identity based on the perpetrator's perception is often the reference point for a legal classification of the victims. Nevertheless, an assumption is made by the perpetrator, often on the below mentioned grounds. We request that the delegates, on this basis, accept this as the definition of race as: groups of people who share physical characteristics, such as skin colour and facial features, as well as similar social or cultural identities and ancestral backgrounds. There are many racial groups, and a person may belong to or identify with more than one group.

Religion: this rather vast topic is encompassed by definitions related to both sociology and theology. Although there are a variety of opinions being offered with regards to this definition, for the purpose of this document, we will be considering a sociological perspective. Sociologists study religion as a social institution and a belief system. Social theorist Émile Durkheim defined religion, in 1915, as a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things". From a sociological perspective, religion is a set of beliefs that can shape people's social identities and relationships, and it can also interact with other aspects of society, such as culture, politics, and the economy. Religion is also a collection of worldviews that relate humanity to spirituality and, sometimes, to moral values. Many religions have narratives, symbols, traditions and sacred histories that are intended to give meaning to life or to explain the origin of life or the universe. In the UN system, Member States consist of a wide range of religious affiliations, including but not limited to: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Sikhism. 5% of NGOs with observer status in the UN consist of multi-religious organisations.

Culture: although a vague term, can refer to many things. You'll find that this term is a central component of this guide. Debates about who should be considered a cultural group and the utility

of identifying cultural genocide without criminalizing it have led to a lack of recognition and response to group destruction. As the Executive Board, we do not wish for such a lack of definition to hinder your path to effective discussion and debate regarding this topic and therefore have defined the word, for the purpose of this Background Guide. Culture can be defined as a concept that encompasses the social behaviour, institutions, and norms found in human societies, as well as the knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities, and habits of the individuals in these groups. Examples of cultural groups include ethnic groups, nationalities, and religious communities. Groups such as professional organizations, hobby clubs, and age groups do not have comprehensive cultural systems and, therefore, do not deserve the label "culture".

Crimes Against Humanity (Source: 1998 Article 7, Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court): crimes against humanity are defined as “any of the following acts when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population.” The acts include murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, imprisonment, torture, rape (and other gender-based or sex crimes), group-based persecution, enforced disappearance, apartheid, and “other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health.”

What's At Stake?

The Agenda for **SOMUN 2025**, **UNHRC**, contains multitudes, and warrants approaching the matter at hand from multiple lenses. However, it must be noted that further, and far more detailed accounts of the given issues, have been provided at later points in this guide. It remains impossible for the Executive Board to include an entirely comprehensive background on the long-standing areas of race, genocide, and indigenous populations, for they have been under wide deliberation for centuries. Nonetheless, we have attempted to give you a satisfactory account of the history, as well as the implications, of these concepts. Keeping in mind that we are approaching this from the perspective of information-sharing rather than conceptual clarity, we hope to equip you with the necessary details of the relevant background at play.

First, we must address the factor of race. Racism is an instrument in the generation of conflict, the fomenting of exclusivist nationalism, and a motor for the disintegration of states and slaughter among neighbors. Governments, political movements, and violent armed groups continue to use racial discrimination as a tool for the political mobilization of supporters, and a framework for the exclusion, exploitation, oppression, and even extermination of others. Whole populations may be denied the full prerogatives of nationality in their own countries--or stripped of their citizenship by political fiat--because of their race or descent. Racism can also intersect

with gender discrimination, xenophobia, as well as ethnic cleansing. As a matter of fact, a large portion of this study guide is dedicated to exploring the interdisciplinary nuances of these concepts. The atrocities of apartheid, genocide, slavery, caste-based violence, and what has come to be known as "ethnic cleansing" are at the extreme end of the spectrum of racial discrimination. So too is the discriminatory treatment of indigenous peoples that threatens their very survival. Progress in international justice to fight impunity for these extreme forms of racism, and in international action to protect vulnerable populations gives us new tools in the campaign toward its eradication. As delegates, you must address the extreme, overt, intentional, and often violent policies and practices of racism that suppress the exercise of the rights of whole peoples. You must further explore and expose the ways in which race and descent combine with violence to curtail the rights of certain populations. You are expected to provide your stance on how exactly the international community must support the new mechanisms of international monitoring, protection, and justice as a bulwark against these forms of racism. At the same time, we notice that other than intentional harm, certain government policies may have a pernicious discriminatory effect even where discriminatory intent is not clearly established. Such public policy and administrative practice can effectively bar members of groups defined on racial or related grounds from the enjoyment of their fundamental human rights no less than do systems of overt discrimination. The Executive Board expects the delegates of this committee to also address the racist effect of government policies and practices that affect hundreds of millions of people; even when racist intent is not clearly present.

Understanding the sources of discrimination is crucial to addressing it effectively. While as mentioned, individual acts, such as verbal abuse or physical violence, represent the majority of reported incidents and often reflect personal prejudices, institutions such as workplaces, schools, and law enforcement, do play a significant role in perpetuating systemic inequalities, and often reflect the broader societal biases in which they operate. Systemic discrimination, rooted in historical and cultural frameworks, remains one of the most challenging forms to combat, as it is deeply embedded in the structures of society. Some notable statistics that emerge are: Individuals are responsible for 59% of reported acts of discrimination, often in the form of verbal or physical abuse. Institutions, including workplaces, schools, and law enforcement, account for 27% of discrimination cases. Systemic discrimination, rooted in cultural and economic structures, contributes to 11% of incidents. Severe acts, such as systematic oppression, are overwhelmingly linked to institutional or structural perpetrators, comprising over 60% of such cases (Global outlook on racism and discrimination, UNESCO). The prevalence of institutional discrimination emphasises the importance of designing and implementing policies addressing racism and discrimination biases in education, employment, and law enforcement, among others. Schools and workplaces, in particular, emerge as critical sites for intervention, with the potential to disrupt cycles of exclusion and marginalization.

We must also consider the implications of xenophobia. There seems to be a fundamental gap in our understanding of it. Xenophobia is conceptually distinct from racism. Although distinct, there lies an element of intersectionality. Xenophobia is also distinct from nativism. Furthermore, theories of racism are largely ensconced in nationalized narratives of racism, which are often influenced by the black-white binary, which obscures xenophobia and shelters it from normative critiques; so, philosophical accounts of racism, rather than merely subsuming racism, end up neglecting this historically important category of exclusion and oppression. Just as philosophers have recently analyzed the concept of racism, clarifying it and pinpointing why it's immoral and the extent of its moral harm, the Executive Board hopes that the delegates analyze xenophobia and offer a pluralist account of xenophobia, with important implications for racism. This analysis is guided by the discussion of racism in recent moral philosophy, social ontology, and research in the psychology of racism and implicit attitudes.

Another aspect to consider is that xenophobia falls through the cracks of international human rights law, especially as a form of racial discrimination under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Colloquially understood as the fear of or hatred of “the outsider,” xenophobia escapes legal recognition and, ultimately, redressal because it does not map onto a protected “ground” easily. It is legally recognized only when it is based on traditional grounds such as color or ethnic origin; that is, when it is shown that an instance of xenophobic discrimination is not simply about treatment based on outsider status but based on racial grounds per se. But the move to make xenophobia “fit” the mold of racial discrimination belies what is significant about xenophobia: that although it often comes entangled with racial grounds such as ethnicity, color, descent, or national origin, it also comes entangled with other grounds such as religion, culture, language, class, etc.; and that racial and non-racial grounds cannot be disentangled from one another. From this understanding, xenophobia can be addressed as discrimination, especially racial discrimination, only when its sui generis nature is understood in these intersectional terms. Further, the impact of xenophobia can be understood as pushing its victims to the margins of a political community, thus creating an underclass or group defined by an admixture of grounds, including racial grounds. Appreciating the nature of xenophobic discrimination in this way holds the key to addressing it in international law. Paradigmatic cases of xenophobic discrimination (expressed in statements like “go back to where you come from”) discriminate against their victims because they are not considered as “belonging to” a nation or a society. This political idea of belongingness to a particular community is in turn co-constituted by an admixture of racial and non-racial grounds. Yet, discrimination based on belongingness falls by the wayside of racial discrimination because it is not considered to be based primarily on racial grounds. Instead, potential cases of xenophobic discrimination may be better identified by first recognizing how xenophobic discrimination has its basis in both racial and non-racial grounds which cannot easily be disentangled, and then judging xenophobia via its impact or effect of pushing its victims to the margins of a political community.

This brings us to considering the status of xenophobia, fueled by notions of the “out-group” in the recent scenario. The last decade was characterized by intense worldwide migration flows and an increasing polarization of (at least) western societies. According to a United Nations report in 2016, the worldwide number of migrants in 2015 was approximately 244 million, including about 21 million refugees from war and persecution. This constitutes over a 40% increase compared to the year 2000. Particularly Northern America and Europe were the main regions of destination of these huge migration flows. Immigration issues played crucial roles in the 2016 US election campaign, and Trump voters in the 2016 election showed significantly lower support to racial equality and disliked globalization and immigration more strongly than voters who did not vote for Trump. Similarly, several European elections (including the vote on Brexit) have been influenced by the heightened salience of immigration, and aversion to Muslim and African immigrants has been the core topic of right-wing populist parties. The recent increase in (low-skilled) migration from Muslim and African Countries has produced a stronger support for right-wing, anti-immigrant parties in several European countries. For example, the number of voters for Germany’s populist right-wing party (AfD; “Alternative für Deutschland”) almost tripled between the beginning of the so-called European refugee-crisis in 2015 and 2018. Hence, societal polarization seems to be particularly driven by immigration issues. Similarly, an increase in low-skilled immigrants increased voting polarization in the US. In light of these recent developments, the importance of combating xenophobia as an antidote against out-group stereotypes has become particularly evident.

Recent years have shown an increase in the rate of xenophobic violence and hate crimes, with reported hate crimes having more than doubled in a decade. In certain countries such as the US, the number of reported hate crimes have increased by about 100% since 2015. Nevertheless, there is an alarming global trend at stake. What you, as delegates, need to consider is not only the moral injustice of these effects, but also its implications for policy making. Macro exposure to xenophobic violence has a negative impact on several dimensions of social and economic integration. It not only reduces the subjective well-being of immigrants, but also strengthens intentions to return to their country of origin. This has been shown to have important implications for immigrant behavior, such as decisions on investment in their host country-specific human capital (Dustmann and Mestres, 2010). In line with this, we also find a negative effect on language skills which are crucial for economic and social integration (e.g. Chiswick, 1991; Bleakley and Chin, 2010). Regressions exploiting the regional variation in crime speak in favor of the existence of a strong macro exposure effect, although an impact of micro exposure cannot be rejected. Delegates of UNHRC are expected to take into consideration that xenophobic violence not only has direct costs, but also has indirect costs by impairing the integration of those immigrants belonging to the target group of hate crimes.

Further, we must also examine the role, interrelation, as well as the stakes of genocide. The twentieth century was the deadliest in all of human history. With eight million Jews murdered

and one million Rwandans, it was named "the age of genocide." Not to diminish the loss of life, but casualty figures merely scratch the surface of the true cost of conflict. Survivors bear the physical and emotional scars of terror, torture, and rape. Conflict also often has dire consequences for economic and human development, as well as the environment. Within organizations, too, conflict can inhibit the effective functioning of the organization. This analysis will attempt to provide a general sense of the true scope of the costs intractable conflicts have for humanity.

Loss of life is perhaps the most obvious cost of violent intractable conflict. Throughout history, technological advancements have made it easier and cheaper to kill more people, whether in domestic conflict or interstate war. The two world wars killed more than 60 million people. In World War II alone, 1 in 22 Soviet citizens were killed, 1 in 25 Germans, 1 in 46 Japanese, 1 in 150 Britons, and 1 in 500 Americans (Encyclopedia Britannica). Particularly in the latter half of the twentieth century, civil war has ravaged much of the world. In the three decades from 1960, civil conflict killed an estimated 700,000 Chinese; 500,000 Indonesians; 2,000,000 Nigerians; 600,000 Ugandans; 500,000 Ethiopians; 415,000 Mozambiqueans; 105,000 Iraqis; and 138,000 Guatemalans. In the Philippines, more than 100,000 lives have been lost since 1970. According to ACLED, Israel's war on Gaza has killed at least 65,419 people and wounded 167,160 since October 2023. About 15 of every 16 Palestinians the Israeli military has killed since its renewed offensive in Gaza began in March have been civilians. Around 60% of the victims have been women. In the four years of the Khmer Rouge rule in Cambodia, 2 million people died due to execution, starvation, and disease, some 20% of the population. Amnesty International and Americas Watch estimated that as of the early 1990s some 210,000 East Timorese had died under Indonesian occupation (out of a 1975 population of 650,000.) This includes not only government forces and rebels, but also civilians, which points to a broader issue. The costs of large-scale conflict involve not only dead and wounded soldiers, but also innocents. Conflict often produces refugee flows, both within the country and across borders. In Sudan, where conflict has been ongoing since 1983, over 2 million people have died and more than 4 million displaced, 75% of which are women and children. Refugees are often vulnerable to natural disaster and manipulation by combatants. What is more, refugees produce significant costs for neighboring countries and the international community in general, as they seek to avert a humanitarian disaster.

Costs often go far beyond the conflict. Long-term injuries victims suffer from combat, rape, and torture affect individuals' ability to earn a living. They also often must deal with lasting psychological effects from the trauma suffered. Deep fear, distrust, depression, and a sense of hopelessness can last long after the conflict is supposedly "resolved." Landmines and unexploded munitions have proven an insidious problem long after a conflict's end as well. In Mozambique's civil war, for example, 10,000-15,000 people were killed by landmines, and one out of every 1862 is an amputee. Every year landmines kill 15,000 to 20,000 people — most of

them children, women and the elderly — and severely maim countless more. The Global Burden of Armed Violence 2008 report estimated that worldwide, the annual productivity costs associated with armed violence— including landmine and small arms violence—is US\$95 billion and could reach as much as \$163 billion— or 0.14 percent of the annual global Gross Domestic Product (Fast Facts- UNDP). Approximately 20 million landmines litter Angola. Mine removal operations do not find every one, so the risk from unexploded munitions even decades after a conflict is over is very real. Human costs are also often more subtle and widespread than merely the direct victims of violence. Conflict is detrimental for health in a number of ways. Aside from psychological effects, violence often leads to the destruction of medical facilities and the disruption of drugs and medical supplies. What is more, it makes agricultural production difficult both through loss of manpower and destruction of land. This inhibits food supplies, thereby leading to malnutrition. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, some 17 million people face significant food shortages due to the ongoing civil war there. Afghanistan has faced endemic hunger for decades and recent estimates are that only 13% of the population has access to safe drinking water. The consequences of these developments are particularly important for fast-developing children. Kids also often see their education suffer, which has long-term costs for their future ability to earn a living. Over 80% of schools and clinics were destroyed in Sierra Leone's civil war (The Hidden crisis: armed conflict and education; EFA global monitoring report, 2011). 45% of Burundian children under the age of 5 are underweight due to food shortages from war and lawlessness (UNICEF Burundi, Nutrition).

Conflict has a variety of economic costs both as direct consequence of violence and as foregone choices in order to fund the conflict. To provide one extreme example, World War II is estimated to have cost over \$1.3 trillion (Reuters). In most instances, conflict is accompanied by a drop in GNP as resources and manpower are redirected away from productive endeavors. The workforce is scattered, either enlisted in the conflict or otherwise displaced as refugees. War and sabotage often leave infrastructure in ruins. Resources are diverted from productive endeavors to purchase arms and pay troops. What is more, there are indirect costs in the form of what is foregone, as funds are diverted from other causes to fight the war. Lost investment is often the result as investors seek safer havens. Conflict also often produces significant environmental degradation. It is difficult to justify environmental protection when other more immediate concerns exist as a result of the conflict. Therefore, environmental damage from accelerated resource extraction may be severe. Munitions and chemical or biological weapons do long-term damage to the land and well. Conflict also reduces tourism, some of which may have supported eco-tourism efforts.

Delegates of this committee are also expected to note the disproportionate impact of genocidal processes on women, and how they often suffer most due to systemic and intersectional discrimination. To illustrate, we will be taking the infamous example of Afghanistan, taking into account the conditions during the previous Taliban rule. The plight of women in Afghanistan offers a snapshot of the fact that women are the ones who pay the price. Under the Taliban,

women were stripped of rights. Under these oppressive conditions, Physicians for Human Rights conducted a survey in 1999 and found 97% of Afghan women suffered from depression and 42% had Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Two years later, the same organization found that in Taliban-controlled areas, 65% of women had considered committing suicide and 16% had actually attempted it. Some 16% have been victims of rape. Economic conditions are also extremely poor. The literacy rate for women was only 13% in urban areas and less than 4% in rural areas as of early 2001. Poverty has led girls to be married or betrothed in their early teens. Some 50,000 widows live in Kabul alone as a result of the civil war. Combined with the constraints on their freedom, these conditions have made it nearly impossible for women to make a living on their own under the Taliban. In light of the return of Taliban rule, their condition continues to deteriorate,

Genocide, xenophobia, and racial discrimination are a thread that often ties together the discrimination faced by indigenous populations. There are more than 5,000 different Indigenous Peoples around the world comprising 476 million people – around 6.2% of the global population. They are spread across more than 90 countries in every region and speak more than 4,000 languages. Although their customs and cultures may differ, Indigenous Peoples experience the same harsh realities the world over. Their human rights are routinely violated by state authorities, and they face high levels of marginalization and discrimination. Indigenous Peoples face eviction from the ancestral lands they have inhabited for generations, as well as restricted access to education, health care and housing. Indigenous human rights defenders are intimidated, attacked, and sometimes even killed, often with the support of the state. Indigenous people are more likely to live in extreme poverty and suffer higher rates of landlessness, malnutrition and internal displacement than other groups. They often rank highest for prison inmates, illiteracy and unemployment, while their life expectancy is up to 20 years lower compared to non-Indigenous people (Global Plan of Action for the Health of Indigenous Peoples, WHO).

In this guide, we will highlight some of the ways in which indigenous populations across the world are discriminated against. Firstly, Although some Indigenous Peoples are self-governing, many are denied the right to freely choose their own government or political systems. This is despite the fact that Indigenous Peoples were governing themselves freely for thousands of years prior to the arrival of colonizers from the 15th century onwards. These rights fall under the umbrella term self-determination; a binding right in international law which refers to peoples freely determining their political status and pursuing their economic, social and cultural development. It is embedded in legal instruments such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, designed to address the impact of colonialism on Indigenous Peoples.

Secondly, they are often victims of forced assimilation. During the 19th and 20th centuries, Canada removed Indigenous children from their families and placed them in federally funded boarding schools, with the intent of assimilating them into broader Canadian society. At these

“Indian Residential Schools”, they were not allowed to speak their languages or express their cultural heritage and identities. As a result, Aboriginal people were expected to have ceased to exist as a distinct people with their own governments, cultures, and identities. An estimated 150,000 First Nations children suffered abuse in these schools (National Library of Medicine, USA). Indigenous children in Australia were also forced to assimilate into white culture and were placed in institutions where they suffered abuse and neglect. These children are known as the “Stolen Generations”. These cases will be further elaborated on in the “Case Study” section of this guide.

Indigenous Peoples’ land ownership rights are also widely abused. Under international law, states cannot relocate Indigenous Peoples without their free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) and without offering them adequate compensation. However, Indigenous Peoples’ lands – home to over 35 per cent of the world’s intact forests and often rich in natural resources, such as oil, gas, and minerals – are routinely appropriated, sold, leased or simply plundered and polluted by governments and private companies. Indigenous land defenders face violence and even murder when they seek to protect their lands. Many Indigenous Peoples have been uprooted from their land due to discriminatory policies or armed conflict. They are regularly cut off from resources and traditions that are vital to their identity, wellbeing and survival. Situations like this force them to flee their homes and move to towns and cities, or face greater marginalization, poverty, disease, violence and even extinction as a People. The challenges and discrimination faced by indigenous populations is widespread, and further outlined at later points in this guide. You, as delegates of the UNHRC, must aim to address it.

Genocide

The UN draws its definition of genocide from the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which was approved by General Assembly Resolution 260 A (III) of 9 December 1948, and entered into force on 12 January 1951.

The definition of the crime of genocide, as set out in the Convention, has been widely adopted at both national and international levels. For example, the verbatim definition has been included in the statute of several international and hybrid tribunals, such as in the respective statutes of the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda and the Extraordinary Chambers in Cambodia.

The same definition was also included in the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), making genocide one of the international crimes over which the ICC has jurisdiction. Clearly, the reach of this Convention goes far. According to Article II of the

Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Religious Genocide:

Religious differences between victimizers and their victims are a common characteristic of genocides and genocidal massacres. Violence and religion have been closely associated in a variety of intricate, often contradictory ways, since the earliest periods of human civilization. Institutionalised religions have practised violence against both their adherents and their opponents. Conversely, religions have also been known to limit social and political violence and to provide spiritual and material comfort to its victims. Religious faith can thus generate contradictory attitudes, either motivating aggression or constraining it. Even as an exclusionary ideology, traditional religion is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for all forms of genocide in time of war.

However, religion can be an enabler that together with other propellants can lead to genocide. Sacred religious sites can be sensitive locations whose violation inspires violence. Radicalization of religious leaders can occur when their religion appears to be under attack, especially during or following a period of widespread violence. This also brings into question the need to examine several groups pursuing a genocidal agenda claiming religious justification: al-Qaeda and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), for example.

The intimate relationship of religious difference to genocide continues to present itself in the conflicts ongoing today. Often the significance of these religious differences is very clear, as in the religious persecutions of the Middle Ages, the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust, the root and branch annihilation of settlements during the partition of India, the massacres of Hindus in East Pakistan, the threatened genocide against the Baha'is in Iran, and the seemingly interminable conflicts in the southern Sudan. At other times, the influence of religious difference is more indirect, compounded with many other elements, for example in Uganda under Amin, or the massacres of Ibos in Northern Nigeria. This committee is encouraged to focus on one aspect of religious differentiation– the theological warrants for genocide in the texts and ideologies in

the interrelated religions of Judaism, Islam and Christianity. You're encouraged to analyse the significance of these texts and ideologies in a historical perspective, with emphasis on the broad societal context, and their power to engage in genocidal action. The recent spread of religious fundamentalism enhances the significance of these texts and ideologies, namely in Israel and its occupied territories, where the clash of religious fundamentalisms introduces a particularly threatening extremist element in the ongoing conflict. This also raises the question of whether religious extremism and fundamentalism can further propel the ongoing genocides of today, in the contemporary world.

Racial Genocide

The Nazis defined the Jews as a race inferior to the Aryan race, the Khmer Rouge identified the 'new people' as enemies with a biologically dissimilar essence, and in Darfur (Sudan), the Janjaweed militia labelled their enemies derogatorily as 'Zourga', or black Africans. Clearly, these victim classifications all have a racial denominator in common. It isn't difficult to draw the conclusion that race can be a significant factor when it comes to genocide and genocidal acts.

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) interpreted the protected groups of genocide, including the racial group, in a purely objective manner. In doing so, the tribunal faced criticism for not accounting for two important facts: first, as we've mentioned in the 'Definitions' section, humankind cannot be meaningfully divided into biologically distinct races. Second, the process leading up to a genocide is subjective: in the perpetrator's eyes, the victim group is different from the perpetrator's ostensibly superior group. This committee is highly encouraged to draw inspiration from this case and rectify this overlooking by the ICTR by exploring not only the prevalence of racial genocide, but also why it is prevalent.

Prior to any genocide, commonalities between 'us' and 'them' are removed. Instead, dissimilarities are enhanced, often by means of communication, to the point where the perpetrator calls for the extermination of the 'others', in this case, genocide. In this process of 'othering', a dichotomy between 'us' and 'them' is created. The marginalised 'other' group can, notably, have an imagined identity, entirely dependent on the perpetrator's perceptions. As such, the victim group is constructed purely subjectively, based upon the perpetrator's understanding of the victims' racial otherness. Dehumanisation is inherent to any genocidal process and abolishes all humanness from the victims, who therefore are not one of 'us'. Dehumanisation is a belief, a way of thinking, according to which some human beings only give the impression of being human. Beneath the surface, however, they are not human after all. Thus, albeit having a human appearance, these dehumanised beings, in the understanding of the perpetrator, consist of an inhuman essence or, put differently, of a racial otherness. Research suggests that biologically

grounded race-thinking is present prior to any instance of mass atrocity. It is important to note that the victim group's dehumanization alone will not lead to genocide. Rather, the mortal threat the victims' out-group allegedly presents to the perpetrator's in-group is what ultimately distinguishes genocide from other discrimination or inhumane treatment. While social sciences have long recognized the importance of the process of othering, in which a group of 'others' is identified, stigmatised, discriminated against, and finally dehumanised, it is rarely discussed.

Systemic racism is closely linked to, and can be followed by or lead to, genocide. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which is a part of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, recognizes that laws, policies, and practices that display systemic discrimination based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin may potentially result in violent conflict and genocide.

A well-known historical example of systemic marginalization leading to genocide is the 1994 genocide of Tutsi people in Rwanda. It is often argued that a cultural mythology regarding Hutus and Tutsis, originally developed and deployed by Rwanda's German and Belgian colonizers, eventually spurred the genocide in 1994. Although these groups existed prior to European colonisation, it was the introduction of a racial ideology based on a hierarchy, with Tutsis being portrayed as socially and physically superior to Hutus, that fed into the essentialization of identity. There are more contemporary examples of this type of systemic discrimination leading to violence, as is expanded upon further at a later point in this guide.

Religion, Race and the Holocaust

The boundary between religious and racial antisemitism has often been blurry and porous. From the late nineteenth century until the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945, Christian clergy often described Jews as a race. This emphasis on race is not a new phenomenon. One thinks of the Inquisition and its emphasis on the "purity of blood". The distinction between Nazi and fascist racial antisemitism and traditional Christian hatred of the Jew is real. The fact that a distinction is not always clear-cut does not mean it does not exist. Christian clergy repeatedly objected to Nazi and fascist attempts to treat Jewish converts to Christianity as Jews, while usually displaying little or no concern for Jews who had not converted. Moreover, Christian clergy often criticised Nazi and fascist attempts to make loyalty to one's race more important than loyalty to one's religion. One cannot account for all of this if one assumes that racial and religious antisemitism are the same thing. More generally, one cannot analyse the changing relationship between religious and racial antisemitism over the course of history if one assumes they are identical. This highlights that genocide has often tended to relate religion to race, thereby preventing

escape through conversion, even if individuals continued to shelter from persecution by dissimulating their religious and racial identity. Race and religion are often interlinked. They fail to work exclusively as propellants and instead interact to further protract the existing issue at hand. It's important to acknowledge that you cannot address one without accounting for the other.

Ethnic & Cultural Genocide

The term ethnic cleansing refers to the forced removal of an ethnic group from a territory. A United Nations Commission of Experts investigating the former Yugoslavia defined it as “rendering an area ethnically homogeneous by using force or intimidation to remove persons of given groups from the area.” Unlike crimes against humanity, genocide, and war crimes, ethnic cleansing is not recognized as a standalone crime under international law. However, the practice of ethnic cleansing may constitute genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes.

Cultural genocide, also known as ethnocide, is the deliberate destruction of a group's culture, religion, and identity. It's a coercive act that's often imposed by a dominant group on a weaker or minority group. Cultural genocide is based on the idea that a group can be destroyed by attacking its ability to preserve and pass on its culture, which would then disappear. Cultural genocide can involve the systematic destruction of traditions, values, language, and other elements that make a group distinct from another. It's been associated with imperialism and settler-colonialism, and examples of cultural genocide abound throughout history, including Tibet. However, the concept of cultural genocide doesn't fit easily within the definition of the crime of genocide, which refers to the intent to physically exterminate a people.

Both ethnic cleansing and cultural genocide are issues that have affected indigenous populations throughout history. An example of this is the treatment that has been accorded to the Native American population in the USA. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, an American historian dedicated to the study of indigenous peoples, concluded that all five acts of genocide listed in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide can be found in the crimes the United States committed against American Indians. Native Americans are undoubtedly victims of genocide, and it is of important significance to admit that U.S. policies toward American Indians are, in fact, acts of genocide. Successive U.S. administrations have not only wiped out a large number of American Indians, but also, through systematic policy design and bullying acts of cultural suppression, thrown them into an irreversible, difficult situation. The indigenous culture was fundamentally crushed, and the inter-generational inheritance of indigenous lives and spirits was under severe threats. The slaughter, forced relocation, cultural assimilation and unjust

treatment the United States committed against American Indians have constituted de facto genocides. Indigenous children had also been separated from their families and traditional lifestyle by the State and put into boarding schools in order to “americanise” them, where they then faced inhumane living conditions and suffered abuse at the hands of cruel faculty. These acts fully match the definition of genocide in the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and have continued for hundreds of years to this day. Some say it is imperative that the U.S. government drop its hypocrisy and double standards on human rights issues, and take seriously the severe racial problems and atrocities in its own country. Many believe that the reflection of the U.S. government looks bleak, especially since its withdrawal from the UNHRC. It has not officially admitted that the atrocities against Native Americans are acts of genocide, unlike some countries such as Canada which have admitted that their histories with their indigenous populations include genocide, and real changes can seem a long way off.

What is Racial Discrimination?

Racial discrimination is any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, or any other field of public life.

Some key Aspects:

- Racial discrimination occurs both at the individual and institutional levels, and includes actions or policies that intentionally or unintentionally disadvantage people based on perceived race or ethnic origin.
- The United Nations regards racial discrimination as an affront to human dignity, and condemns it as an obstacle to equality and peaceful relations among peoples.
- State parties to relevant conventions are obligated to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination, prohibit racial segregation or apartheid, and provide remedies and protection to those affected.
- Examples range from unequal access to employment or education, racially motivated violence, hate speech, and biased government or institutional practices.

What is Xenophobia?

Xenophobia is a phenomenon that is difficult to define and measure. The phenomenon is defined in its most basic form by using its etymological heritage. Soyombo (2008) defines xenophobia as: The concept is believed to have originated from two Greek words: *xenos* (meaning foreigner or stranger) and *phobos* (meaning fear). This makes the definition ‘fear of foreigners’. This definition is considered lacking by many authors, however. Xenophobia as a phenomenon can be found across the world, differs from case to case and depends on historical and cultural context. Pedahzur & Yishai (1999) show that a state as young and as diverse in heritage as Israel is no exception to hatred towards strangers. That means that even people who have been subject to hatred themselves are not immune to the effects of xenophobia, which illustrates that xenophobia can occur anywhere in the world. Xenophobia is seen as a breach of human rights (UNHCR, 2020), which means that the phenomenon often falls in the realm of international law. Strangely enough there is no definition in international law of xenophobia (UNHCR, 2020). The UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, uses a definition in their guidance on Racism and Xenophobia, by UN Special Rapporteurs on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance given in a report to the Human Rights Council in 2016: “[Xenophobia] denotes behavior specifically based on the perception that the other is foreign to or originates from outside the community or nation” and, later in the report, xenophobia exists when: “individuals are denied equal rights on account of real or perceived geographic origins of the said individuals or groups, or the values, beliefs and/or practices associated with such individuals or groups that make them appear as foreigners or outsiders.” (UN special Rapporteurs quoted from A/HRC/32/50, 13 May 2016, in UNHCR, 2020). These two parts define one of the two key issues in xenophobia: What constitutes a foreigner in the definition of xenophobia? Here, the Special Rapporteurs of the UN together make the case that someone is foreign, when that someone is or is perceived to be from a certain geographic origin. This ties xenophobia to ‘foreignness’ on the basis of geography. The fear portion of the definition remains loosely defined, however. What exactly constitutes ‘fear’ in the definition of xenophobia? An explanation is offered by Solomon & Kosaka (2013) to illustrate that the fear of foreigners turns into dislike or hatred. This is because the foreigners are perceived as a threat to the economic success and the national identity of the group committing the xenophobia. This, argues Solomon & Kosaka further along the lines of Mogeckwu (2005), is because the members of the group committing xenophobia are often ignorant of the ways of the group they perceive as ‘foreign’ and start hating them as a result of this ignorance. Another problem with defining xenophobia is that it is often difficult to distinguish from racism (although this has been addressed earlier in the guide). Oxford languages (2021) defines Xenophobia as: ‘dislike of or prejudice against people from other countries’ Racism is defined by the same source as: ‘prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism by an individual, community, or institution against a person or people based on their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or

marginalized.’ Taking into consideration the UN’s definition of xenophobia the main difference between the two definitions is the reason someone is being disliked. Looking at these two definitions xenophobia occurs when someone is treated differently because they are perceived to be from a different geographical area, and racism occurs when someone is being treated differently because they are perceived to belong to a specific racial or ethnic group. Sometimes telling the difference between these two motivations can be difficult. There is an example that illustrates this point very well from the COVID-19 crisis. People of Asian descent are being threatened and discriminated against across the world because of the COVID-19 crisis (Human Rights Watch, 2020a). It can be argued that these acts of discrimination are racism because these attacks are based on the perception of looking and seeming Asian, which is an argument based on the phenotype of a racial group, which makes it a racist argument. If the discrimination is done from the perspective that the victim is from China the argument changes in theory, to a xenophobic argument. According to this analysis, the difference between xenophobia and racism is a small one and theoretical at that. Researchers such as Soyombo (2008) use the terms according to their own insight. But researchers such as Kim & Sundstorm (the ones quoted at the beginning of this guide) maintain that there are significant differences between the two terms. You, as delegates, are tasked with engaging in discourse regarding how these interpretations can shape your national policy.

Legal Framework

Xenophobia is recognized in numerous international instruments, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). The UNHRC and other UN bodies note that xenophobia often overlaps with racism and related intolerance, and affects vulnerable populations such as migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers. According to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance (WCAR), xenophobia is one of the main sources of contemporary racism and leads to violations against non-nationals.

Impact

Xenophobia divides societies into insiders and outsiders, leading to suspicion, exclusion, and sometimes violence towards groups deemed foreign or threatening to national identity. The

effects can be seen in discriminatory policies, social exclusion, hate speech, and even terrorist acts targeting specific ethnic groups.

What are Indigenous Populations?

Indigenous populations are groups whose ancestors originally inhabited a geographic region before the arrival or dominance of other groups. These communities maintain unswervingly distinct cultural, social, economic, and political identities compared to the mainstream society, and self-identification as Indigenous is fundamental to their status.

Key Characteristics

- **Historical Continuity:** Indigenous populations typically trace their residences and heritage to societies existing before colonization, settlement, or the drawing of present state boundaries. Their identity is deeply connected to being original inhabitants and maintaining ties with ancestral lands over generations.
- **Connection to Territory and Natural Resources:** These groups have a profound spiritual, cultural, and economic link to their territory and natural resources. This connection influences their practices of stewardship, ecological knowledge, and communal life. Indigenous stewardship of land often results in vital contributions to environmental sustainability, carbon sequestration, and biodiversity preservation.
- **Distinctive Language, Culture, and Beliefs:** Indigenous populations possess unique languages, belief systems, social structures, and forms of governance. Their cultures reflect centuries of knowledge, rituals, art, medical practices, and philosophies that differ sharply from those of the dominant society.
- **Non-dominance and Minority Status:** Most Indigenous communities are non-dominant, meaning they form minority sectors within the broader state population. They often face subjugation, discrimination, and challenges in having their rights, customs, and perspectives recognized at a national level.
- **Self-identification and Community Acceptance:** The United Nations emphasizes self-identification at the individual and group level, with acceptance as an Indigenous member integral to community recognition. There is no single global definition; instead, self-identification is considered the most effective approach.

- **Determination to Preserve Identity and Environment:** Indigenous peoples share a resolve to preserve and transmit their distinct cultural identities, environments, and traditional ways of life to future generations, upholding ancestral customs and resisting assimilation.

Examples

The United Nations lists Indigenous peoples across the globe, each with unique traditions and histories:

- The Lakota (North America), the Mayas (Central America), and the Aymaras (South America)
- The Inuit and Aleutians (Circumpolar region), the Sámi (Northern Europe)
- The Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Australia), the Māori (New Zealand)

Diversity and Global Status

There are around 476 million Indigenous people in over 90 countries, belonging to at least 5,000 distinct groups. They are present on every inhabited continent, yet have vastly different experiences depending on their local and national context, from legal recognition and land rights to autonomous governance and participation in political life. Indigenous stewardship is often linked with better ecological outcomes and unique knowledge systems, but these communities also face high rates of poverty, displacement, and cultural erosion in the modern era.

Key Challenges:

Some of the challenges faced by indigenous populations were highlighted previously in this guide. Here, we will provide a more detailed account of it.

Earlier we had mentioned that their right to self determination and right to cultural lands were violated. They are also victims of forced assimilation. Another way in which they face injustice is that discrimination impacts Indigenous Peoples' everyday life, restricting their rights to health care, education and housing.

From India to Peru, Indigenous women have higher rates of maternal mortality, teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases and are more likely to suffer violence. Indigenous women are less likely to have access to healthcare facilities when pregnant because of discrimination and mistreatment; and so, they are more likely to die giving birth. For example, in Panama and Russia, Indigenous women are about six times more likely to die in childbirth than women from the non-Indigenous population. The birth rate for Amerindian adolescent girls is twice that of the general Guyanese population. In Kenya, Maasai women are twice as likely to have had no antenatal care, and in Namibia, San women are ten times more likely to give birth without skilled attendance.

Their marginalization also means that Indigenous Peoples are at greater risk during public health emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. A lack of access to health care and public information, as well as essential services including sanitation and clean water, means that Indigenous Peoples were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. The effects were exacerbated by the failure of many states to properly consult with Indigenous Peoples when developing COVID-19 response plans. This meant that policies were not tailored to their specific needs. For example, public health information was often not provided in Indigenous languages. Indigenous people are also more likely to get diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV.

An education gap between Indigenous children and their peers persists on a worldwide scale. Education systems often fail to cater to the particular needs of Indigenous Peoples, with obstacles including a lack of teachers who speak Indigenous languages. This is compounded by Indigenous Peoples' lower levels of access to computers and the internet: the so-called 'digital divide'.

Despite contributing a tiny proportion of global carbon emissions, Indigenous Peoples are among the first to face the direct consequences of climate change. Their intimate relationship with the natural environment means that climate change poses a unique danger to their way of life. Climate change threatens the habitats and ecosystems Indigenous people depend on for food, water, medicine, livelihood, and identity. Indigenous Peoples are also disproportionately impacted by fossil fuel exploration and extraction because political marginalisation makes it harder for them to oppose it. Exploitative companies often infringe on these communities' rights to information, public participation and free, prior and informed consent. For example, Amnesty International has shown how Adivasi communities in India affected by coal mining are rarely properly consulted before their land is acquired, ecosystems decimated and livelihoods jeopardized. Indigenous People also have a critical role to play in combating climate change. Their sophisticated knowledge of the natural world means that where Indigenous Peoples have control of the land, forests and biodiversity flourish. Their sustainable land use fights climate change and builds resilience to natural disasters. Indigenous Peoples and their local communities manage 300,000 million metric tons of carbon in their trees and soil, a massive contribution to the global initiative to curb climate change.

Environmental defenders are at the forefront of the struggle for climate justice, particularly in the Americas – the world's deadliest region for those defending land, territory and the environment. In 2022, according to Global Witness, 177 people were killed for defending the environment – rate of one every other day – with almost 88% of the killings taking place in the Americas. Colombia was the deadliest country for environmental defenders, with 60 murders, with Brazil, Mexico and Honduras also in the top five. Of those killed across the year, 34% were Indigenous people. Environmental defenders in the Americas are intimidated, attacked, harassed or killed, especially when their demands run counter to powerful economic and political interests who often act with impunity. These crimes are invariably not properly investigated, and victims

almost never receive justice. Despite the enormous risks, Indigenous people and other activists across the Americas continue to mobilize to protect the environment. They carry much of the burden for preserving the environment, protecting and caring for 22% of the Earth's land surface (Amnesty International).

Case Studies

Given below are a few case studies illustrate the real-world impact of xenophobia, genocide, and discrimination against indigenous populations, and further emphasise the need to engage in this discussion. Please note that these are only a few examples, and you are highly encouraged to look beyond these studies in order to be informed.

Genocide in Darfur: Civil war has existed between the northern and southern regions of Sudan for more than a decade. The northern region, centered on the capital of Khartoum, is predominantly made up of Muslims who are ethnically Arab, while groups of Christians and animists live in the south. The Khartoum government under General Omar al-Bashir wished to create a more Islamic-based government that was opposed by the southern groups and led to civil war. Not until 2005, and with heavy international influence, did the Comprehensive Peace Agreement end the two-decade-long civil war that had resulted in more than 2 million deaths and 4 million displaced persons in the south. In the western region of Darfur, a rebel group sought to have the same benefits and attacked a government outpost in 2003. The government of Sudan reacted with crushing brutality. Although the Darfur region is predominantly Muslim, there were economic and tribal/ethnic differences in the region. Economically, the Arab groups had been nomadic herders while the African groups (such as the Fur, Maasalit and Zaghawa) were pastoralists. The Sudanese government exploited these differences by arming ethnic Arab militia groups, known as the "Janjaweed," to attack the ethnic African groups. The government would attack from the air, and then, the Janjaweed forces would enact a scorched earth campaign, burning villages and poisoning wells. Nearly 400,000 people have been killed, women have been systematically raped and millions of people have been displaced as a result of these actions. In 2004, the United States government recognized these actions as genocide under the United Nations (UN) Genocide Convention. Criminal proceedings have begun with the International Criminal Tribunal, and both the African Union and United Nations have sought to introduce forces to stop the violence and aid the internally displaced, as well as refugees who fled to Chad. In March 2009, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir for directing a campaign of mass killing, rape and pillage against civilians in Darfur, in addition to the outstanding warrants for former Sudanese Minister of State for the Interior Ahmad Harun and Janjaweed militia leader Ali Kushayb. Despite this progress, according to UN estimates, 2.7 million Darfuris remain in internally displaced persons camps and more than 4.7 million Darfuris rely on humanitarian aid. On July 9, 2011, South Sudan became the world's newest country. While this is a major step toward ending the violence in Sudan, civilians across Sudan remain at risk. Systematic violence against the people of Darfur, as

well as in the disputed Abyei area and Southern Kordofan, continues on a new political landscape altered by the independence of South Sudan.

Genocide of the Tutsis, Rwanda: Beginning in 1994 and lasting only 100 days, the Rwandan Genocide is one of the most notorious modern genocides. During this 100 day period between April and July 1994, nearly one million ethnic Tutsi and moderate Hutu were killed as the international community and UN peacekeepers stood by. In 1962, Rwanda gained independence from Belgium, but the roughly 30 years of Belgian rule left an indelible mark on the country and its people. While some argue Rwanda's Hutu majority are Bantu people from the southwest, and the Tutsi are Nilotic people that migrated from the northeast, Gourevitch argues these theories are derived from racist legends. Rwandan history is largely undocumented, so explanations about the origins of these two groups and the differences between them, are widely speculative. While it is known that these ethnic identities preceded colonization, these identities, which were quite fluid in practice, became rigidified and racialized under Belgian colonial rule through the use of ID cards. The colonial period was largely characterized by the rule of the Tutsi elite and the exploitation of Hutu. But the 1959 Hutu Peasant Revolt resulted in the Belgians reallocating power to the Hutu majority. With independence, the Hutus consolidated power and facilitated widespread discrimination against Tutsi, excluding Tutsis from prominent careers and implementing education quotas. A Hutu Power ideology emerged, grounded in the Hamitic Hypothesis, in which Tutsi were recognized as foreigners to Rwanda, rather than an indigenous ethnic group. This racist ideology, initially propagated by Germany and later Belgium during colonization, argued Tutsis were inferior to the Hutu majority. This theory would be used to incite the genocide in 1994. In the months and weeks before the genocide began, Hutu radicals began compiling lists of potential Tutsi targets and moderate Hutus. In addition, the Hutu dominated government began stockpiling weapons, including machetes. These machetes and other rudimentary weapons would be the tools that carried out the genocide. In mid-1993, Hutu radicals launched their own radio channel, Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM). The channel would be used to incite hatred towards Tutsi by using propaganda and racist ideology, such as the Hutu Ten Commandments. On April 6, 1994, when the President's plane was shot down, killing both the Rwandan and Burundian presidents, the radical Hutu radio channel announced the deaths, urging Hutus to "go to work" and attack the Tutsi population. The genocide had begun. To truly understand the Rwandan Genocide, one must move beyond the traditional binary of perpetrators and victims. Rwandans often transcended the categories of victim, perpetrator, bystander and rescuer— acting as a rescuer at one moment and a perpetrator another. Tutsi victim testimony discusses the importance of rescuers— Hutu men and women who risked their own lives to hide and save Tutsi men, women, and children. Tutsi survivors discuss a multitude of survival strategies from playing dead to negotiating and buying their safety. Furthermore, both Hutus and Tutsis were subjected to mass violence, torture, and rape during the genocide. Yet because the victims of the Rwandan Genocide, per the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, were targeted for their ethnic identity solely, the victims of the genocide were Tutsis. It is important to note, however, that Hutus and some Twa were also victims of non-genocidal violence. For example, both Tutsi and Hutu women were the victims of sexual violence. Hutu propaganda, such as the Hutu Ten Commandments, portrayed Tutsi women as being sexually available. This appealed to the Hutu desire to create an ethnically Hutu-homogenous state. Rape of Tutsi women was systematic, and after the genocide subsided, an outbreak of HIV swept throughout Rwanda. Yet Hutu women also experienced violence from

both their Hutu counterparts and members of the Tutsi-led RPF that was progressing through the country trying to end the genocide.

The Nanjing Massacre: Also known as the “Rape of Nanjing,” Nanjing Massacre refers to the mass killings of disarmed Chinese soldiers and civilians, as well as other atrocities such as rape and looting, committed by the Japanese troops after they occupied Nanjing in the winter of 1937–1938. It is widely regarded as one of the worst Japanese war crimes in World War II. Shortly after the Imperial Japanese Army entered the Chinese capital of Nanjing (previously written as Nanking) on December 13, 1937, Western newspapers reported horrific conditions in the fallen city including mass execution of Chinese captives. Wartime records, mostly compiled by a few Westerners who stayed in the city and organized a refugee zone, showed widespread Japanese atrocities of rape, random killing, and looting that continued for weeks. After Japan’s defeat in 1945, the Nanjing Massacre became a leading case of Japanese war crime at the military tribunals conducted by the victorious Allies between 1946 and 1948. Citing witness accounts and burial records, these tribunals put the total number of Chinese killed in the Nanjing area variously from 100,000 to over 300,000. In addition, they estimated that there had been around 20,000 cases of rape and that one third of the city had been destroyed by the Japanese troops within six weeks of occupation. Largely overlooked before the early 1970s, the Nanjing Massacre has since become a hotly contested issue in Japan and between Japan and China. In 1985, China opened a large memorial museum in Nanjing, where the number of 300,000 victims is on prominent display. The Chinese government has designated December 13 a day of national commemoration. Documents related to the Nanjing Massacre submitted by China have become part of the UNESCO Memory of the World registry. In recent decades, much important first-hand evidence has emerged and makes it both possible and necessary to reassess this historical event. Wartime Japanese military and personal records confirm that at least several tens of thousands of Chinese had been killed in mass executions that were condoned, if not ordered, by the high command of the Japanese army in China. Moreover, killing disarmed Chinese captives and atrocities against Chinese civilians had already begun well before Japanese troops reached Nanjing; many such atrocities continued long afterward, thus suggesting there was more than a temporary breakdown of Japanese army discipline in Nanjing. Western and Chinese accounts add vivid details of sexual violence, indiscriminate killings, and looting by Japanese soldiers. They also reveal grave errors on the part of the Chinese defense that likely made the situation worse. Despite these points of convergence among historians, however, there is still disagreement over the exact number of victims and causes of the Japanese atrocities in Nanjing.

Armenian Genocide: The Armenian Genocide was the mass murder of at least 664,000 and up to 1.2 million Armenians by the nationalist ruling party of the Ottoman Empire, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP, also known as the Young Turks), between 1915 and 1916. It is sometimes referred to as the first genocide of the 20th century. The Armenians were a primarily Christian ethnic group who had lived in Eastern Anatolia (modern day Eastern Turkey) for centuries. At the turn of the twentieth century, approximately two million Armenians lived in the Ottoman Empire, primarily in rural areas although there were also small communities in large urban areas such as Constantinople. While life was often unpredictable and unjust, under the empire’s millet system in the nineteenth century, the group did enjoy significant administrative and social autonomy, and had their own language and church. As the First World War loomed,

the Ottoman Empire was in a state of decline and as a result had become increasingly polarised . Between 1912 and 1913, the Empire lost 83% of its European territories during the largely unsuccessful Balkan Wars. This led to an increase in anti-Christian sentiment and amplified the nationalist desire of the Ottoman leaders to create an ethnically homogenous community. It was hoped that this community would then strengthen the empire through shared beliefs and, as a result, ensure its survival. As the majority of the inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire were Muslim, the Christian Armenians were increasingly seen as outsiders and a threat to the harmony of the empire. During the First World War, the Ottoman Empire joined forces with Germany and Austria-Hungary but suffered several significant defeats and quickly retreated. To conceal their failure from the public, the Ottoman leaders openly blamed their defeat on Armenians in the region and stated that they had betrayed their empire by fighting for and helping the enemy forces. This deliberate falsehood acted as a catalyst and justification for the genocide of the Armenian people, whereby the CUP government used the emergency wartime conditions to create a more ethnically homogenous community. As a result of this, Armenian soldiers were categorized as a direct threat to the Ottoman war effort, removed from the Ottoman army, and massacred. The intellectual elite of Armenian society concentrated in areas such as Constantinople were also rounded up, imprisoned and later murdered. The remaining Armenians, primarily women, the elderly and children, were relocated from strategically important areas and forcibly marched to the Deir ez-Zor by Ottoman forces and local collaborators. Little to no food and water was provided on these 'death marches' – despite the length of the journey – and those who could not keep up or continue were executed. As a result of these conditions, thousands died. Some Armenians in low-density areas were able to escape execution by converting to Islam (as long as the number of Armenians in the area remained under 5-10% of the total population). Young girls and women were also occasionally spared for forced labour as domestic servants, to become wives in Muslim households or to be used as sex slaves. Those who survived the death marches were imprisoned in camps, such as at Deir ez-Zor or Ras al-Ayn, where conditions were extremely poor and many thousands died of disease and malnutrition. Between March and October 1916, there was another wave of executions, and as many as 200,000 more people were murdered. In total, by 1917, at least 664,000 and up to 1.2 million Armenians had been massacred.

The Cambodian Genocide: The Cambodian Genocide was the murder of between 1,500,000 and 3,000,000 Cambodians by the Khmer Rouge (the popular name for the Communist Party of Kampuchea [CPK]), between 1975 and 1979. The Khmer Rouge came to power following a period of civil war and unrest in Cambodia and in the midst of Cold War tensions between America, the Soviet Union and Communist China. The Khmer Rouge were led by Pol Pot and held radical totalitarian beliefs. They wanted to create a classless, rural, agricultural society where personal property, currency, religion and individuality did not exist. The Khmer Rouge began to implement this vision immediately after taking power on 17 April 1975. Within hours, the new regime had expelled the capital city's, Phnom Penh, two million residents to the countryside at gunpoint to begin agricultural labour. People associated in any significant way with the previous government, religion, or education, as well as members of ethnic cleansing , were targeted for persecution, imprisonment, torture and murder. The Khmer Rouge created 189 prisons, which were de facto execution centres. The most notorious of these prisons/execution centres was named 'S-21', and of the approximately 14,000-17,000 prisoners held there by the Khmer Rouge, just 12 are known to have survived. Outside of the prisons, many hundreds of

thousands of people were also executed on the 'Killing Fields'; areas of farmland where people were killed by a blow to the back of the head before being dumped into mass graves. Some Cambodians were also exploited as forced labourers by the regime and died as a result of over-work and malnutrition. Despite the Khmer Rouge's focus on production through mass forced labour, they were ineffective rulers and their economic mismanagement caused significant shortages of food and medicine. This mismanagement, combined with the regime's murder of many of its doctors and medical staff, meant that hundreds of thousands of Cambodians began to die from hunger caused by the famine and treatable diseases such as malaria. Later, as the economic situation worsened and paranoia increased, the Khmer Rouge also began to execute members of its own party for failing to achieve the unrealistic agricultural aims or for being supposed foreign spies. After almost four years in power, in December 1978, in response to the Khmer Rouge's invasions of the previous year, Vietnam successfully invaded Cambodia and, on 7 January 1979, overthrew the Khmer Rouge by entering the largely deserted capital of Phnom Penh. Following the genocide Cambodia continued to be politically unstable. Although there was significant evidence of the atrocities, the Cold War continued to dominate international concerns, and many Western countries were openly hostile to the new Vietnamese installed communist government. Although Pol Pot and Ieng Sary were tried in absentia for genocide shortly after the collapse of the regime, it was not until 2001 that a court dedicated to persecuting perpetrators of the genocide was created, by which time many of the movement's other leaders had already died. The court's first trial began in 2009, and, since then, of the five people indicted, three people have been sentenced to life imprisonment.

Xenophobic attacks in South Africa: Xenophobic attacks in South Africa are not exclusively a recent phenomenon. Due to longstanding patterns of labour migration, conflict and economic hardship in neighbouring countries, South Africa has become a primary destination and transit point for many migrants throughout the region, and the numbers are likely to increase in the coming years. Despite its promise of democracy and human rights for all those who live in it, a significant proportion of the country's population remains highly xenophobic. The country has, in the last decade, witnessed extreme forms of xenophobic violence. In May 2008, foreign nationals and ethnic minorities were attacked in at least 138 sites across the country, resulting in 62 reported deaths, a third of which were South African citizens from ethnic minorities. Property and belongings were looted and/or destroyed, and more than 100,000 were displaced. Hundreds of women and children were attacked and dozens were reported raped. Since then, there has been at least one attack on foreign nationals every month. Many of these have been fatal. In January 2015, more violent attacks took place in Gauteng and spread to Cape Town, with hundreds displaced and at least 178 arrested in connection with the attacks. In April of 2015, another wave of xenophobic attacks took place in Durban and Gauteng where thousands were again displaced. Up to eight foreign nationals were reported dead, and thousands were repatriated and deported. Temporary refugee camps were also set up by the various provincial and local governments. The attacks apparently started a week after King Goodwill Zwelithini was reported saying that foreigners "should pack their bags and go home," and while the violence broke out in small towns and informal settlements in Durban, it quickly spread to other provinces including Gauteng. Zwelithini later hosted an "anti-xenophobia imbizo," which was met with mixed responses. While the general public and international community asked why perpetrators have not been charged, others called for the King to be charged and held accountable for the attacks, with representatives of other African countries calling for South Africa to be banned from the

African Union (AU). In response to the attacks, the government's inter-ministerial Committee on Migration launched "Operation Fiela" ("Operation Sweep/Clean"), a national task-team established first as an anti-xenophobia initiative to fight against crime which later morphed into an entity broadly aimed at eliminating criminal activities. The team has been criticized by some for allegedly targeting foreign nationals in their raids, a "state-sponsored xenophobia." Over two days, a total of 2,908 arrests were made, 1,123 of which were undocumented immigrants, and more than 15,000 undocumented immigrants were repatriated—the majority of whom had opted to be sent back to their home countries. Along with Operation Fiela, the government responded to violence against non-nationals with a call for more restrictive borders. In response to the xenophobic violence, other African States, particularly the sub-Saharan states, threatened to deport South African nationals and businesses in their countries, while others sent buses to repatriate citizens from South Africa.

Forced assimilation in Canada: Residential Schools were "schools" that were set up by the Canadian government but administered by churches. The Mohawk Institute in Brantford, Ontario, was the first to open in 1831, and the Gordon Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan, being the last to close in 1996. Nearly 130 schools were placed throughout Canada and sought to have housed 150,000+ Indigenous children throughout the years of operation. However, these children didn't just choose the residential schools. They were taken from their families and forced into the schools. The main goals of the schools were to remove the children from their homes in order to assimilate them into the Euro-Canadian and Christian ways of living, isolating them from their own culture. Statements like "Kill the Indian, Save The Man" or "Kill the Indian in Child" were common slogans that perfectly explain the veracity of the school's intentions. Indigenous children were not allowed to speak their own language, use their own names, or practice anything of their own religion and culture. To detach the children from their culture, they would give them new names, cut their hair short, and force them to wear uniforms. Every aspect of their identity was suppressed, they had to abandon their way of life due to the belief that their culture was inferior to the mainstream white man's ways. For example, in 1920, Duncan Campbell Scott, the Canadian Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs said of his government's policy: "Our objective is to continue until there is not an Indian that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department." The government's goal was to erase Indigenous Peoples and the easiest way for them to do so was cultural genocide. They believed Indigenous peoples as ignorant, savages, a burden to society, and in need of guidance on the "right way to live". Therefore, they assimilated Indigenous youth with similar tactics that the United States used. A tactic called "aggressive civilization", which also led to the public funding of residential schools in Canada. The major key of aggressive civilization was the use of religious instruction and skills training that would help Natives catch up with western society. Given that the schools were meant for indigenous erasure, treatment was clearly not good-natured. The schools were breeding grounds for suffering and foul treatment. They had strict rules and often their days were regimented by timetables. The family was not allowed to interact with other family members, for fear they would practice their customs and traditions. The interactions were not allowed for the same reason the children were taken away from their traditional home, to limit their culture. For example, Prime Minister Macdonald, "When the school is on the reserve, the child lives with his parents who are savages; he is surrounded by savages, and though he may learn to read and write, his habits and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can

read and write.” Also, boys and girls were separated the majority of the time. In terms of the education factor of the schools, children often learned practical skills instead of the standard grade school curriculum. Girls would learn how to cook, clean, sew, and do laundry. Meanwhile, boys would learn things like carpentry and farming. They made the children involuntarily complete these tasks, unpaid child labor. The labor distracted them from their actual schoolwork, meaning some students would only reach grade levels five or six at the age of eighteen. Aside from the neglect of a proper education, the schools also abused many of the students. Many students were sexually assaulted by the priest and nuns who abused their positions of power. Nearly twenty-eight percent of the young women were assaulted and 5% of the assaults recurring every six months. The schools are often referred to as a place of institutionalized pedophilia. A majority of the children were also beaten and tormented. Some beaten and strapped or tied and shackled to their beds. Needles piercing their tongues or electric shocks were also a recurring punishment for speaking their native language. Often they were neglected meals and had poor nutrition along with poor sanitation. Nuns and priests used the teachings of Christianity to scare the children, creating and using the fear of God to make them embrace Christianity. Nearly one in twenty-five students lost their life to residential schools and the pain and suffering continues to torment many of the former students and their communities. The trauma of the school’s colonization tactics has often led to self-abuse in an attempt to cope. According to the University of British Columbia, “Among First Nations people aged 10 to 44, suicide and self-inflicted injury is the number one cause of death, responsible for almost 40 percent of mortalities. First Nations women attempt suicide eight times more often than other Canadian women, and First Nations men attempt suicide five times more often than other Canadian men. Some communities experience what have been called suicide epidemics.” Also, simply being a descendant of a parent who attended residential schools, increases your chances of being sexually assaulted by 2.35 times. All in all, residential schools have negatively impacted the community. Indigenous peoples are still fighting to re-learn and practice their culture.

Residential schools in the United States: For 150 years, the United States government sent Native American children to remote boarding schools as part of a systematic effort to seize tribal lands and eradicate culture. In the 1800’s, the United States passed many racist anti-indigenous laws and policies, including the establishment of residential schools. Indigenous children were forced to attend these schools. The goal was to wipe out the indigenous ways of life and heritage through forced assimilation. The Carlisle Indian School opened in 1879 and operated in Pennsylvania for 39 years. In that time, thousands of students from over 140 tribes were forced to attend and experienced inhumane treatment and living conditions. Students were forced to cut their hair, change their names, stop speaking their Native languages, convert to Christianity, and endure abusive disciplinary measures like solitary confinement. While many children returned to their families, more than 180 children died while attending the school. The Carlisle Indian Industrial School is just one example of North American indigenous people’s experience with residential schools. Thanks to the research conducted by The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, we know that by 1926, over 80% of school-age Native American children (almost 61,000) attended 367 of these schools in the United States. Further research and former student testimony can be found in this study carried out by the Native American Rights Fund. The sheer scope of this experience is still unfolding. Hundreds of thousands of students passed through these schools in the United States. from the 1860s to the 1970s. In the United States, the students at these schools experienced similar atrocities of abusive

discipline, cultural erasure, and physical and sexual abuse. Childhood sexual abuse is a heinous crime that alters the trajectory of the survivor's life. Research has proven that child sex abuse victims experience a slew of traumatic physical and mental repercussions such as the development of chronic health conditions or PTSD. Research projects containing personal testimony showcase time and time again the prevalence of sexual violence that took place at these schools. For example, a survey of 45 Lakota respondents found that 28.6% of boys and 17.7% of girls reported they were sexually abused in these institutions. Native American survivors have made the effort to pursue justice for these crimes. Former students from a South Dakota boarding school sued the Catholic Diocese who ran the school for the rampant sexual violence they endured. However, like many survivors, legal obstacles made it difficult to achieve justice. In 2010, South Dakota blocked anyone over 40 from suing an institution (although they could still sue individual perpetrators) for childhood sexual abuse, making it impossible for these former students to get justice through the legal system. The trauma that these schools in the United States inflicted is still felt today.

COVID-19 and indigenous populations: Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, Indigenous Peoples had less access to education than non-Indigenous individuals because of long-term and systematic discrimination. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted and exacerbated these disparities. Indigenous children have less access to computers and the internet, meaning they were cut off from educational opportunities when the pandemic hit. The pandemic magnified the impact of this 'digital divide' between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students even further, as schools closed their doors and turned to online learning. Many Indigenous children, especially in rural areas, lacked access to the devices and internet connection to access virtual classes. Further issues included high internet costs, low or non-existent reliable network or speed, and regular power cuts. These impacts could have been avoided if governments accounted for the needs of Indigenous students in their COVID-19 response plans. In most countries, Indigenous Peoples were not included in the development of these plans. This failure to consult with marginalized people resulted in Indigenous Peoples being denied some of their most fundamental rights, including education and healthcare. Although school closures have ended, the pandemic's impacts on Indigenous children continue in the form of learning loss and dropouts.

Stolen Generations, Australia: The phrase Stolen Generation refers to the countless number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were forcibly removed from their families under government policy and direction. This was an active policy during the period from the 1910s into the 1970s, and arguably still continues today under the banner of child protection. It is estimated that during the active period of the policy, between 1 in 10 and 1 in 3 Indigenous children were removed from their families and communities. The removal of Indigenous children was rationalised by various governments by claiming that it was for their protection and would save them from a life of neglect. A further justification used by the government of the day was that it was believed that "Pure Blood" Aboriginal people would die out and that the "Mixed Blood" children would be able to assimilate into society much easier, this being based on the premise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were racially inferior to people with Caucasian background. There were a number of government policies and legislation that allowed for the removal of Aboriginal children. One of the earliest pieces of legislation in relation to the Stolen Generation was the Victorian Aboriginal Protection Act 1869, this legislation allowed the

removal of Aboriginal people of mixed descent from Aboriginal Stations or Reserves to force them to assimilate into White Society. In NSW, the Board for the Protection of Aborigines was established in 1883, and this board was initially established to provide 'the duty of the State to assist in any effort which is being made for the elevation of the race, by affording rudimentary instruction, and by aiding in the cost of maintenance or clothing where necessary, as well as by the grant of land, gifts of boats, or implements of industrial work.' Prior to 1909, this Board acted without legislative authority. In 1915, the Aborigines Protection Amending Act 1915 (NSW) was introduced, this Act gave the Aborigines' Protection Board the authority to remove Aboriginal children without having to establish in court that the children were subject to neglect. Once a child was removed from their family, they were forced to assimilate into the White Society. This included being forbidden to speak their traditional language or participate in any form of cultural practice or activity, and having to adopt new names and identities. Many of these children were informed that their families had either given them up or had died. To increase the success of removal policies, the authorities would often send the children vast distances from their Countries and families. For some of the children that were removed and forced to assimilate into White Society, they developed a shame of their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage. For some as they grew older and started their own families, they continued to hide their Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage from their family, with many not accepting this heritage until much later in life. Many of the stolen children were placed into group homes such as the Kinchela Boys Home and the Cootamundra Girls Training Home. At these homes the children were taught skills such as housekeeping and farm handling, so that once they were to leave the home, they would be able to be placed into the service of a White family. Whilst in these training homes many of the children experienced neglect and abuse in many forms, including sexual and physical abuse. In 1969, New South Wales abolished the Aborigines Welfare Board, and this effectively resulted in all States and Territories having repealed legislation that allowed for the removal of Aboriginal children under a policy of 'protection'. The practice of removing children continues to this day, research released in 2019 compiled from data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and data from the Western Australia Department of Communities and Department of Health indicate that between 2012 and 2017 the number of Aboriginal Children placed into Out of Home Care rose from 46.6 per 1000 to 56.6 per 1000 children. This research also found that the rate of infants (under 1 year old) placed into Out of Home Care rose from 24.8 to 29.1 per 1000, between 2013 and 2016. On the 13th February 2008, Kevin Rudd, the then Prime Minister of Australia, made an Apology to the members of the Stolen Generation. Although the period known as the Stolen Generation technically ended in 1969, it is important to understand that the effect of the Stolen Generation is still being felt by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples today. Many Aboriginal families have experienced inter-generational trauma, due to the trauma experienced by their parents or grandparents who lived through this period of history. The Stolen Generation has resulted in traditional knowledge being lost as this knowledge was not able to be passed down to the next generation.

Berta Cáceres and activism: Berta Cáceres, a Honduran human rights defender, spent decades campaigning for the environment and Indigenous rights. This is particularly risky work in Honduras, one of the most dangerous places on earth for human rights defenders. Since 2013, Berta led with COPINH (Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras) a campaign against the proposed construction of the Agua Zarca hydroelectric dam in Río Blanca.

If built, it would have disrupted the flow of the Gualcarque river, a site sacred to the Lenca Indigenous community as well as an invaluable source of food and drinking water. Berta's fearless activism made her some powerful enemies. Along with others involved in the campaign, she suffered harassment and even death threats; something she had long been used to. Despite this, the authorities failed to provide Berta or any of her colleagues with effective protection and on 2 March 2016, two armed men broke into her home in Intibucá and shot her dead. After a long-running fight for justice, in June 2022, David Castillo, a former manager at the hydroelectric dam company, was sentenced to 22 years in prison for organizing Berta's assassination. Seven others had already been sentenced to prison in 2019. Berta's relatives and COPINH continue to call for all those involved in ordering or carrying out the killing to be held accountable.

Forced evictions of the Maasai in Loliondo, Tanzania: On 10 June 2022, multi-agency Tanzanian security forces, including the army, police, Field Force Unit, Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority, and TANAPA rangers, violently evicted Maasai residents from Loliondo in Arusha region to secure 1,500 km² of grazing land under the justification of wildlife conservation, despite a 2018 East African Court of Justice order prohibiting evictions until ownership disputes were resolved. The Maasai, who have faced repeated forced removals since their relocation from Serengeti National Park in 1959, gathered in Ololosokwan village to protest, but were met with live ammunition and tear gas, leaving at least 40 people seriously injured. Many were refused treatment in local hospitals unless they produced a Police Medical Examination Form (PF3), forcing some to seek urgent aid in Kenya. Security forces raided villages, destroying homes, livestock enclosures, food supplies, and property, while also looting valuables; numerous residents fled into forests or across the Kenyan border, with about 60 families still displaced and destitute in Narok, Kenya, as of May 2023. During the crackdown, 84-year-old Oriaisi Pasilance Ng'yo was shot and went missing, while others were beaten and displaced from their only sources of water and pasture. Authorities arbitrarily arrested 27 people on murder charges over a policeman's death, with some arrested even before the alleged killing, and 132 others accused of residing illegally, but all charges were later dismissed for lack of evidence. The crackdown was part of a long-standing pattern of excluding the Maasai from their land in favor of lucrative tourism and hunting concessions, granted to private companies since 1992 under a conservation framework reinforced by the Wildlife Conservation Act (1974, revised in 2009). By restricting access to their ancestral lands without free, prior, and informed consent, Tanzania left over 70,000 community members with too little land for grazing, decimating livestock and traditional livelihoods. Amnesty International, through research visits, interviews, and visual evidence, documented widespread human rights abuses: unlawful killings and injuries, destruction of property, denial of healthcare, arbitrary arrests, censorship of media and NGOs, impoverishment through confiscation and auctioning of livestock, and disruption of education. The evictions not only violated Tanzania's constitutional guarantees of equality and non-discrimination but also breached international human rights obligations, while highlighting corporate complicity in abuses. International experts, including the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment and the World Bank, stress that true conservation must involve Indigenous custodians like the Maasai through their knowledge, participation, and benefit-sharing, rather than violent displacement serving private tourism interests.

Forced evictions of the Benet in the name of conservation, Uganda: On 16 February 2008, Ugandan authorities, led by the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) with backing from the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF), forcibly evicted 178 Indigenous Benet families from Mount Elgon forest in Bukwo and Kween districts, despite a 2005 High Court Consent Judgment that had legally recognized the Benet as the rightful historical inhabitants of the forest and directed the government to redress their marginalization in education, healthcare, and infrastructure. Instead of implementing the judgment, the government returned three years later to remove the Benet without compensation, resettlement, or their free, prior and informed consent. More than a decade on, the Benet remain in temporary camps on insecure land where they are prohibited from building permanent homes, leaving them to live in fragile huts without electricity, safe drinking water, or adequate sanitation. Their conditions are made worse by the harsh and mountainous terrain, settlements at 1,900 metres altitude require long and hazardous treks just to access roads or services, which has left them exposed to floods and landslides, such as the April 2020 disaster that killed three people and displaced many others. Despite Mount Elgon's role as a water catchment, the Benet in camps often collect unsafe water hundreds of metres away, while limited toilets and widespread open defecation increase risks of disease for both local residents and downstream communities. With agriculture and pastoralism restricted by the ban on accessing ancestral lands, livelihoods have collapsed, compounded by frequent reports of harassment, beatings, extortion, confiscation of livestock, and even killings by UWA rangers against those attempting to enter the park. The community's cultural ties—ritual sites, fruit gathering, honey collection, and hunting, have also been severed, deepening their loss of identity and dignity. Access to basic services is extremely limited: healthcare is often inaccessible due to high costs, impassable terrain, and the long distances to clinics, with some patients reportedly dying en route. Education too is precarious; children must navigate steep, muddy paths to poorly equipped schools, many without adequate classrooms, desks, or chairs. Though Uganda has free primary education, feeding programs still charge fees many Benet cannot afford, resulting in children going without meals, higher dropout rates, and early marriage or child labor. The education gap is worsened by poor infrastructure, with only a handful of schools even minimally fit for purpose. Meanwhile, politicians have frequently promised land allocations to the Benet, particularly in election seasons, but no lasting solution has materialized, leaving the issue repeatedly politicized rather than genuinely addressed. The 2008 eviction is part of a broader pattern of forced displacement in Uganda justified in the name of conservation and development. In Kiryandongo district, for example, more than 35,000 people from 2,300 families have been evicted since 2017 to make way for multinational agribusiness projects, with security forces again central to the process. Even though the High Court in a 2019 ruling declared the absence of eviction safeguards unconstitutional and a violation of the rights to life, dignity, and property, evictions remain widespread, often carried out by UWA in protected areas, Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) officers in urban settings, or the UPDF reinforcing state actions. Although a temporary ban on evictions was issued in March 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions, Amnesty International documented continued threats and imminent evictions elsewhere in the country. The plight of the Benet demonstrates how failures in policy, law, and governance converge to perpetuate violations of Indigenous peoples' rights. Forced into worsening poverty over generations since the colonial period first declared their lands a forest reserve in 1920, the Benet continue to face denial of land rights, loss of livelihoods, discrimination in access to healthcare, education, and safe housing, and ongoing physical and cultural insecurity. Amnesty International calls on President Yoweri Museveni's government,

re-elected in 2021, to urgently reverse the practice of forced evictions, guarantee the Benet's right to land and permanent settlement with security of tenure, provide fair compensation and access to basic services, and adopt conservation policies that integrate human rights protections. Authorities must ensure that environmental and climate change measures are implemented in ways that respect the rights, needs, and perspectives of Indigenous communities, rather than repeating patterns of violence and exclusion. The experiences of the Benet reveal that conservation and human rights do not need to be in conflict but can, if properly managed, reinforce each other to protect both vulnerable people and fragile ecosystems.

Given below is a brief of some of the human rights abuses suffered by indigenous populations in specific countries and regions:

India: For decades, Meitei, Kuki, and Naga militias in the Northeast Region have engaged in combat with Indian security forces over divergent nationalistic and religious demands. However, the Meitei and the Kuki are the only two parties involved in the most recent conflict. Tensions erupted when Kukis started protesting Meitei claims for official tribal recognition, which they claimed would increase their already substantial influence on the government and society and allow them to purchase land or settle in Kuki-dominated areas. The Kukis actually think that Meitei government operations made a noticeable effort to repress their villages.

China: Within and around the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese government has been accused of committing a number of human rights violations against the indigenous Uyghur people and other cultural minorities that are often referred to as a genocide. Since 2014, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)-led government, led by CCP general secretary Xi Jinping, has pursued policies that have resulted in the imprisonment of more than one million Uyghur peoples.

Colombia: Indigenous communities in Colombia have experienced tremendous violence from right-wing paramilitaries, left-wing guerrillas, and the Colombian government as a result of the protracted conflict there. These communities include the Awá, Wayuu, Pijao, and Paez people. Armed forces, transnational resource extraction firms, and drug gangs have all used force to drive indigenous populations from their homes.

The Middle-East: The Yazidis are a native Middle Eastern minority that follow their own monotheistic faith. Multiple studies have led researchers to the conclusion that the Yazidi community in Iraq has been the target of genocide, including mass killings and rape, by Islamist extremists (most recently by ISIL, but other Islamist groups have also committed violent acts against Yazidis in the past).

Sri Lanka: The United Nations has labelled the persecution of Sri Lankan Tamils during the Sri Lankan Civil War and the anti-Tamil pogrom in 1958 as genocidal in nature. In 1958, mobs in

Sri Lanka ruthlessly murdered tens of thousands of Tamils, beginning a string of genocides that eventually erupted into a civil war in 1983. Since the end of the civil war in 2009, the Sri Lankan government has been under intense fire from throughout the world for deploying heavy weaponry, abducting and killing Sri Lankan Tamils, bombing civilian areas, and utilizing sexual abuse.

Current Status

The United Nations Human Rights Council is actively addressing discrimination rooted in racial inequality and xenophobia, with significant focus on the situation of Indigenous populations in its most recent sessions and ongoing initiatives. Key updates include policy assessments, new resolutions, and expert consultations that highlight persistent challenges faced by Indigenous communities, as well as renewed commitments from member states to eradicate racial discrimination and promote equal rights for all. The United Nations Human Rights Council is currently prioritizing actions and discussions that address discrimination rooted in racial inequality and xenophobia, with a particular emphasis on the status and rights of Indigenous populations. This is reflected in recent sessions, updated resolutions, and ongoing reviews of policies and treaty obligations concerning Indigenous communities and other marginalized groups worldwide.

Recent Developments and Resolutions

- The Human Rights Council continues its follow-up on the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, which frames global efforts to combat racism and xenophobia, urging States to fully implement recommendations and support those directly affected, especially Indigenous Peoples.
- A special panel in August 2025 reviewed how racism undermines democratic institutions, with emphasis on the disproportionate impact on Indigenous Peoples and people of African descent.
- The Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples reported in 2024 that treaty body jurisprudence is vital for defending the rights and political participation of Indigenous Peoples, incorporating their needs into international law and monitoring.

- The Council recognizes the unique legal recognition of Indigenous Peoples, but notes ongoing misconceptions and misapplications at national and regional levels, particularly in Africa and Asia, which sometimes undermines genuine progress.

Indigenous Populations: Legal Status and Recognition

- There is a push for stronger national laws explicitly recognizing Indigenous Peoples and enhancing their participation in policy-making that impacts their communities.
- Reports highlight continued disparities in regional recognition, a need for direct involvement of Indigenous leaders in Council proceedings, and reform of laws to ensure access to justice and equity.
- The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, 2007: The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), adopted in 2007, introduced several landmark rights to protect and empower indigenous communities worldwide. It emphasised the right to self-determination, granting indigenous peoples the freedom to determine their political status and pursue their economic, social, and cultural development. UNDRIP recognized the right to land, territories, and resources traditionally owned or used by indigenous peoples. It affirmed their right to maintain, control, and protect their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and spiritual practices, fostering the preservation of their distinct identities.
- Furthermore, the declaration underscored the principle of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC), ensuring that indigenous communities must be consulted before any decision affecting their land, resources, or rights is made, thereby promoting equitable participation in decision-making processes. UNDRIP marked a significant step towards addressing historical injustices and advancing the rights and well-being of indigenous peoples globally.
- Indigenous and Tribal People's Convention, 1989: The Indigenous and Tribal People's Convention, 1989 (ILO Convention No. 169), is a crucial international treaty created by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to safeguard the rights of indigenous and tribal populations. It sets forth landmark rights by emphasising indigenous communities' self-determination, cultural integrity, and ownership over their lands and resources. The convention involves governments, indigenous representatives, and workers' organisations.

- Key provisions include the right to participate in decisions affecting their lives, the protection of traditional lands, and the preservation of cultural heritage. It introduced the principle of consultation and consent, ensuring indigenous communities' involvement in policies affecting them. Parties that ratified the convention committed to respecting these rights and developing policies in collaboration with indigenous representatives. Implementation involves legislations, administrative measures, and educational programs promoting indigenous rights. The convention stands as a crucial framework for fostering indigenous empowerment, cultural preservation, and equitable development.
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966: The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) is a significant international treaty adopted by the United Nations in 1966. It focuses on safeguarding economic, social, and cultural rights globally. The covenant introduces landmark rights, including the right to work, fair wages, adequate living standards, education, and health. It recognizes the right to social security, the right to form and join trade unions, and the right to participate in cultural life. Parties involved in the covenant are primarily United Nations member states.
- The covenant outlines obligations for states to progressively realise these rights through legislative, administrative, and other measures. Reporting mechanisms allow for monitoring and review of states' implementation efforts. By emphasising these rights, the covenant aims to improve living conditions, reduce poverty, and enhance the well-being of individuals and communities. It plays a pivotal role in shaping international human rights discourse and promoting social justice on a global scale.
- The Convention and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted in 2007 are mutually reinforcing instruments providing the framework for the universal protection of indigenous and tribal peoples' rights.
- In order to exchange ideas and best practices regarding the realisation of indigenous peoples' rights, the General Assembly decided in its Resolution 65/198 of December 21, 2010, to hold a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly, to be known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. This meeting was held in September 2014.

Relevant Resolutions regarding indigenous populations

- ★ A/RES/77/460
- ★ A/RES/69/327
- ★ A/RES/66/296
- ★ A/RES/65/198

- ★ A/RES/57/192
- ★ A/RES/57/193
- ★ A/RES/53/130

Indigenous children: Challenges, Healthcare and Education

Indigenous youth and children are one of the most vulnerable communities, and require the attention of the UNHRC. They are often confronted with the difficult choice of either maintaining their roots in the indigenous community or pursuing education and employment in cities far from home. However, being far from home further exposes them to the risks of both physical and emotional violence. This has led to the observance of far higher rates of suicide and self-harm in indigenous youth than other youth, with many experiencing intergenerational trauma as a result of colonisation and assimilation policies. There have been reports of under-registration of indigenous births and deaths, as well as, in certain instances, the exclusion of whole populations of indigenous peoples. Disjointed and incomplete data are a result of the history of institutionalised discrimination against indigenous peoples by settler populations, as well as the importance of self-identification and the classification of "indigenusness" for many indigenous communities.

With the concept of indigenous children, comes the concept of diverse culture, languages and way of living. Too often, education systems in the world do not respect these people, because of these issues. There are too few teachers who speak their languages and their schools often lack basic materials. Educational materials that provide accurate and fair information on indigenous peoples and their ways of life are particularly rare. There are many reasons behind this, particularly, but not only, the following:

1. **Cultural Relevance:** It's important to recognize and incorporate indigenous knowledge systems into the curriculum to ensure that children's cultural identity is preserved and celebrated.
2. **Language Preservation:** Bilingual or multilingual education programs can help children maintain their native languages while also learning the dominant language of the region.
3. **Historical Trauma:** Many Indigenous communities have a history of colonisation, forced assimilation, and displacement. These factors can lead to intergenerational trauma that impacts educational outcomes. Culturally sensitive approaches are needed to address these traumas and create a safe and supportive learning environment.
4. **Community Involvement:** Involving Indigenous communities in the design and implementation of educational programs is essential. Collaboration with elders, leaders, and parents helps ensure that education aligns with community values and needs.

5. **Equity and Access:** Indigenous children often face barriers to accessing quality education, including remote locations, inadequate infrastructure, and socio-economic challenges. Efforts should be made to provide equitable access to education, including appropriate resources and technologies

Key Challenges

1. Persistent Systemic Racism, Hate Speech, Targeted Violence, and Economic

Marginalization- Systemic racism is engrained within institutions—such as policing, criminal justice, and education—where discriminatory practices and biased policies disproportionately impact marginalized and Indigenous groups. Hate speech and targeted violence, especially through digital platforms and in public discourse, continue to fuel exclusion, fear, and direct harm against these communities. These groups also face persistent economic marginalization through barriers in employment, housing, and access to public services, often resulting in cycles of poverty and social exclusion.

2. Calls for Reparatory Justice and Transformative Change- There is a strong international movement advocating for reparatory justice to address the historic and ongoing consequences of slavery, colonialism, and institutional racism. Reparations can include financial compensation, land restitution, policy reforms, public apologies, and educational initiatives aimed at acknowledging harm and fostering genuine reconciliation. This approach prioritizes accountability for both past and present injustices and promotes transformative changes to dismantle discriminatory structures.

3. Inclusion and Concrete Action by States- The Council emphasizes that States must take decisive, practical steps—such as enacting anti-discrimination laws, ensuring accountability in law enforcement, and investing in affected communities—to address these challenges. Importantly, it urges the involvement of civil society and the direct participation of representatives from marginalized and Indigenous populations in decision-making processes, so that policies reflect the needs and lived realities of those most affected.

Legislations and Policies

- Resolution A/HRC/58/16 (2024):
Focuses on combating racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance. The Resolution reaffirms the importance of the International Convention on the Elimination

of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) and calls for enhanced implementation of its provisions, including protection of Indigenous peoples' rights and stronger measures against hate speech and racially motivated violence.

- Resolution A/HRC/59/62 (2025):
Emphasizes efforts to address systemic racism and xenophobia, urges member states to adopt inclusive policies specifically benefiting marginalized and Indigenous communities, and encourages active participation of Indigenous peoples in decision-making processes affecting their rights and territories.
- Resolution A/HRC/60/69 (2025):
Highlights the persistent challenges faced by Indigenous populations globally related to discrimination and exclusion. It calls for strengthened national legal frameworks aligned with UNDRIP, better access to justice, and meaningful participation of Indigenous representatives in UN human rights mechanisms.
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD):
A core treaty requiring states to prohibit racial discrimination in all fields, including legal frameworks protecting Indigenous peoples and minority groups from xenophobia and racial inequality.
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP):
Provides normative guidance for upholding Indigenous rights to culture, lands, self-determination, and protection against discriminatory policies.
- The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) continually reviews country reports and issues recommendations urging specific legislative and policy reforms to eliminate racial discrimination and protect Indigenous peoples.

QARMA (Questions A Resolution Must Answer):

- Should there be a definition for 'xenophobia' in international law, and if so, how can it contribute towards mitigating the issue?
- Must there be a specific description for indigenous people?

- What technical and policy measures can effectively identify and correct systemic biases and blockages for racial and ethnic minorities accessing justice?
- How can Member States harness the role of the media in the portrayal of vulnerable communities and racial minorities?
- Are reparations required for indigenous populations who have been victims of genocide and racial discrimination?
- How can Member States draft policy frameworks, and ensure their implementation, in order to ensure that discrimination on the grounds of racial inequity, ethnic intolerance and xenophobia is not exacerbated through the media?
- What is the role of cultural intolerance in discrimination against indigenous communities?
- How can we prevent the religious and ideological induction of oppressed communities?
- How can Member States address the disproportionate impact of racial intolerance, xenophobia and discrimination on women?
- What policy frameworks can be developed in order to address the impact of discrimination on indigenous women?
- How can Member States find a balance between respecting cultural autonomy, and addressing potentially harmful cultural practices (child marriage in some indigenous communities, female genital mutilation etc)?
- How can the UNHRC and Member States collaborate to set global governance standards on xenophobia, genocide and discrimination against indigenous populations?
- Are reservations for indigenous students in educational institutions a requirement of today?
- How can Member States ensure the cultural and social integration of indigenous communities and minorities within society while respecting their traditional lifestyle?

- What international law frameworks can be developed to protect the integrity and cultural land rights of indigenous populations, and shield them from violations?
- How can the UNHRC and other international regulatory bodies increase accountability for states regarding state-sponsored ethnic violence or disinformation campaigns?
- How can the perspectives of Indigenous peoples be involved in the education and healthcare system?
- What mechanisms can UNHRC recommend for the implementation and enforcement of existing international legal frameworks on the prevention and addressment of genocide on both a short and long term scale?
- What loopholes or gaps can be identified in international law that pose challenges for the mitigation of genocide and genocidal acts?
- How can genocide be prosecuted better on both a national or international level, through international cooperation?
- How can rigorous and effective auditing processes be implemented to ensure transparency and accountability for States in meeting their obligations with regard to this agenda?

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