



## 4<sup>th</sup> Anavryta Model Lyceum Model United Nations 2025

**FORUM:** Special Conference on “Democracy, Good Governance and Civil Society”

**TOPIC:** Reducing human rights’ violations in times of conflict

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**POSITION:** Deputy President

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### PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Hello everyone!

My name is Aristea and I am glad to be your chair for the 4th AMLMUN! I am a 16 year old student from Anavryta Model Lyceum. I am very excited to collaborate with you all. I hope you all have a great time immersing yourselves in the role of diplomats and supporting the views of your respective countries these days!! The following paper aims to help you fully understand and be prepared for the conference. If you have any questions regarding our committee's topic, feel free to contact me.

Best regards,

Aristea Stavroulaki/aristavroulaki@gmail.com

### TOPIC INTRODUCTION



A man cooks inside his damaged apartment in the Khezaa district in Khan Yunis, Gaza, November 25, 2023.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Watch. *Human Rights Watch’s Role in Conflict and Crisis*. Human Rights Watch, 22 Dec. 2023, [www.hrw.org/news/2023/12/22/human-rights-watches-role-conflict-and-crisis](http://www.hrw.org/news/2023/12/22/human-rights-watches-role-conflict-and-crisis). Accessed 27 Aug. 2025.



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It is well known that armed conflicts have been through the years some of the worst forces against human rights, generating widespread injustice, instability, and unfortunately suffering in their wake. When societies descend into war or violent conflict, the rule of law is undermined, state institutions are eroded, and populations become vulnerable to abuse. In such environments, civilians tend to pay the highest price. They can undergo mass displacement, denial of basic freedoms, arbitrary violence, and discriminatory persecution. Moreover, international humanitarian law, aiming to regulate armed conflicts and protect civilians, is flagrantly violated or deliberately violated by powers on an ongoing basis. Thus, the protection of human rights during times of war is not just a moral necessity but an imperative requirement for international peace and security.

War crimes such as torture, arbitrary killing, and rape frequent civilians. Systematic ethnic cleansing can be visited upon minority groups, while children are recruited as child soldiers or denied protection and education. Availability of food, water, and healthcare diminishes, leading to humanitarian tragedies far from the battlefields. While all these are happening, political freedoms such as the freedom of speech and assembly may be stifled in the name of "security needs," and as a result the societies are being silenced. In modern conflicts involving non-state actors and terrorist groups as well, the line between combatants and civilians becomes more blurred, and safeguarding human rights is even more difficult.

The global community has created tools to mitigate all the dilemmas. The Geneva Conventions, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and various treaties all have the aim to guarantee basic rights during times of conflict. Institutions such as the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, and regional associations have the attempt not only to exert accountability on perpetrators but also prompt humanitarian intervention. With no such institutions, however, enforcement is still problematic. Geopolitical rivalry, political will shortfalls, and the capability limitations are making it impossible for external actors to cause a prevention or a containment for such abuse. Inaction in protecting rights in conflict not only causes immediate harm but also sows seeds of long-term volatility, releasing cycles of violence and grievance that can persist far after the war itself has ended.



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Palestinian children navigating rubble<sup>2</sup>

Reducing human rights violations in war thus have a need for a combined effort. Early warning and preventive diplomacy are needed to identify tensions that can escalate into violent conflict. Stricter accountability mechanisms are able to ensure punishment of all crimes during conflicts that are against humanity. Humanitarian people must be given safe and unfettered access to deliver the best humanitarian aid to affected civilians. Second, governments and the international community should invest in peace-building initiatives that bolster local institutions, re-establish the public's confidence in one another, and reinforce the empowerment of excluded groups.

Lastly, the protection of human rights in times of conflict causes immediate crisis. A society that emerges from conflict with rights and dignity intact will more likely reconcile and stabilize. By having dedication to international collaboration, humanitarian law's priority, and a broadening of accountability, the global community can also reduce the scope of human rights abuses in times of conflicts. And despite the challenges that remain, the pursuit of this objective is unavoidable—not only in the interest of protecting threatened civilians but also in promoting a world in which human dignity, even in war's darkest hour, will be respected.

### DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

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<sup>2</sup> “Palestinian children navigating rubble.” *Common Dreams*, photo by [Photographer Name], [www.commondreams.org/media-library/palestinian-children.jpg?id=52168097](http://www.commondreams.org/media-library/palestinian-children.jpg?id=52168097). Accessed 27 Aug. 2025.



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### Human Rights

"Human rights are rights we have simply because we exist as human beings - they are not granted by any state. These universal rights are inherent to us all, regardless of nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status. They range from the most fundamental - the right to life - to those that make life worth living, such as the rights to food, education, work, health, and liberty."<sup>3</sup>

### International Humanitarian Law

"International humanitarian law is a set of rules which seek, for humanitarian reasons, to limit the effects of armed conflict. It protects persons who are not or are no longer participating in the hostilities and restricts the means and methods of warfare. International humanitarian law is also known as the law of war or the law of armed conflict."<sup>4</sup>

### Civilian Protection

"The Protection of Civilians (POC) is a responsibility that includes all parts of a peacekeeping mission: civilian, police and military. In many cases, peacekeeping missions are authorized to use all necessary means, up to and including the use of deadly force, to prevent, deter or respond to threats of physical violence against civilians. The POC mandate is limited to where the Mission operates and has the necessary capabilities. It is also without prejudice to the primary responsibility of the host government to protect their populations."<sup>5</sup>

### War Crimes

"War crimes are crimes that come under the collective name of 'core international crimes'. Core international crimes are some of the gravest crimes in international law, examples of them can include; the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and torture."<sup>6</sup>

### International Criminal Court (ICC)

<sup>3</sup> **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.** "What Are Human Rights?" *OHCHR*, United Nations, [www.ohchr.org/en/what-are-human-rights](http://www.ohchr.org/en/what-are-human-rights). Accessed 27 Aug. 2025.

<sup>4</sup> **International Committee of the Red Cross.** "What Is International Humanitarian Law?" *ICRC*, 5 July 2022, [www.icrc.org/en/document/what-international-humanitarian-law](http://www.icrc.org/en/document/what-international-humanitarian-law). Accessed 27 Aug. 2025.

<sup>5</sup> **United Nations.** "Protection of Civilians." *United Nations Peacekeeping*, [peacekeeping.un.org/en/protecting-civilians](http://peacekeeping.un.org/en/protecting-civilians). Accessed 27 Aug. 2025.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations. "War Crimes." *Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect*, [www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/war-crimes.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/war-crimes.shtml). Accessed 27 Aug. 2025.



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"The International Criminal Court (ICC) investigates and, where warranted, tries individuals charged with the gravest crimes of concern to the international community: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression. The Court is participating in a global fight to end impunity, and through international criminal justice, the Court aims to hold those responsible accountable for their crimes and to help prevent these crimes from happening again. The Court cannot reach these goals alone. As a court of last resort, it seeks to complement, not replace, national Courts. Governed by an international treaty called the Rome Statute, the ICC is the world's first permanent international criminal court."<sup>7</sup>

### Peacekeeping

"Peacekeeping assists host countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace. Peacekeeping has unique strengths, including legitimacy, burden sharing, and an ability to deploy and sustain troops and police from around the globe, integrating them with civilian peacekeepers to advance multidimensional mandates. UN peacekeepers provide security and the political and peacebuilding support to help countries make the difficult, early transition from conflict to peace. UN Peacekeeping is guided by Consent of the parties; Impartiality; Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate. Today's multidimensional peacekeeping operations are called upon not only to maintain peace and security, but also to facilitate the political process, protect civilians, assist in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants; support the organization of elections, protect and promote human rights and assist in restoring the rule of law."<sup>8</sup>

### Monitoring and Reporting

"Monitoring is the process of regularly examining, monitoring, and watching a process or circumstance over some period in order to witness whether it is occurring as planned and identify any problems or alterations that will occur. Reporting is the process of reporting or presenting the data gathered through monitoring, typically in an easy and systematic way such as a document, presentation, or verbal update. Together, monitoring and reporting are designed to ensure that progress is being tracked, issues are detected sooner, and stakeholders are being informed so that related action can be taken when appropriate".<sup>9</sup>

### Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

"The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is a global political commitment in which states are responsible for safeguarding their people from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and

<sup>7</sup> International Criminal Court. "The Court." *International Criminal Court*, [www.icc-cpi.int/about/the-court](http://www.icc-cpi.int/about/the-court). Accessed 27 Aug. 2025.

<sup>8</sup> United Nations. "What Is Peacekeeping." *United Nations Peacekeeping*, [peacekeeping.un.org/en/what-is-peacekeeping](http://peacekeeping.un.org/en/what-is-peacekeeping). Accessed 27 Aug. 2025.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations. "Monitoring and Reporting on Grave Violations." *Children and Armed Conflict*, [childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/tools-for-action/monitoring-and-reporting/](http://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/tools-for-action/monitoring-and-reporting/). Accessed 27 Aug. 2025.



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crimes against humanity. It is based on the notion that sovereignty is not merely a privilege but also a responsibility, and as such governments have a duty to prevent such acts occurring in their nations as well as intervene and stop them should they occur. If a state refuses or is not able to protect its citizens, then the duty lies with the international community, which will step in on behalf perhaps through diplomacy, humanitarian intervention, or, as a last resort, collective action. R2P is meant to prevent or stop mass atrocities before the situation escalates.”<sup>10</sup>

### Transitional Justice

“Transitional justice refers to the process of judicial and non-judicial measures taken by governments to address human rights abuses and injustices that occurred during their times of conflict, repression, or dictatorship and transitioning into peace and democracy. Criminal prosecution, truth commissions, reparations programs, and institutional change in an effort to prevent future abuses are just some of the actions. The purpose of transitional justice is to acknowledge past injustices, offer justice to the victims, promote reconciliation between warring communities, and build a safer and rights-conscious society for the future.”<sup>11</sup>

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### The Second World War (1939-1945) and the birth of human rights protection

During World War II (1939–1945), civilians were systematically targeted by genocide, mass killings, forced population transfer, and starvation as a weapon of warfare. The Holocaust put in the limelight the violation of the most basic rights: the right to life, liberty, and security. In response to it, the Nuremberg and Tokyo Tribunals were established to try those responsible for such crimes. These trials put the principle into place that states and even individuals can be held criminally responsible for crimes against humanity. This was the creation of new international criminal law.

### Rwanda and the Balkans in the 1990s

It is well known that the Rwandan genocide at 1994 killed nearly 800,000 people, predominantly members of the Tutsi minority, violating their right to life and their right against genocide. It also deserves to be noted that during the Balkan wars (1991–1995), ethnic cleansing, violence actions such as rape, and besieging cities like Sarajevo were gargantuan abuses of humanitarian law. In both cases, the ICTR (International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda) and the ICTY (International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia) were set up to prosecute war crimes and crimes against humanity. The actions reflected the determination of the international community to eliminate impunity.

### Darfur and the responsibility to protect (2000s)

<sup>10</sup> United Nations. “About the Responsibility to Protect.” *United Nations*, [www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/responsibility-protect/about](http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/responsibility-protect/about). Accessed 27 Aug. 2025.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. “Transitional Justice.” *OHCHR*, [www.ohchr.org/en/transitional-justice](http://www.ohchr.org/en/transitional-justice). Accessed 27 Aug. 2025.



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The Sudanese conflict in Darfur began in the early 2000s and escalated to become one of the most serious humanitarian crises of the 21st century. Government forces and Janjaweed militia carried out mass murder, forced displacement, and systematic rape, violating basic human rights such as the right (but not limited to) to life, bodily integrity, and protection from persecution. The aftermath was international debate on the principle of Responsibility to Protect (R2P), and the UN made its adoption official in 2005. The ICC indicted a sitting head of state for the first time, President Omar al-Bashir, on genocide and crimes against humanity charges. While enforcement was really difficult, the case was willing to challenge impunity and place accountability at the conflict resolution.

### **Child Soldiers and the Sierra Leone Civil War**

The Sierra Leone conflict (1991–2002) known for things such as (but not limited to) the widespread use of underaged citizens as soldiers, rape, amputation, and mass killings. Child recruitment in armed groups was a heinous violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which stripped children of protection, education, and dignity. The international community aimed to embrace the establishment of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Notably, it was the first to recognize the recruitment and use of child soldiers as a war crime under international law. This precedent strengthened global action to protect children in armed conflict and stimulated the United Nations and other actors to act on policy with respect to demobilizing and reintegrating child soldiers around the world.

### **Syria and Contemporary Conflicts**

The Syrian civil war, which has been one of the most severe ongoing human rights emergencies of the modern era since 2011, has subjected the civilian population to indiscriminate bombing, chemical attacks by weapons, sieges aimed at starvation, and forced mass displacement. These are blatant denials of rights to life, health, and a fair standard of living under Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law. International monitoring bodies, including the UN Human Rights Council, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch, have thoroughly documented the abuses. Sanctions, humanitarian intervention, and documentation of crimes are all meant to pressure perpetrators and preserve evidence for trial in future. The Syrian case shows the gap between norms and effective implementation in ongoing armed conflicts.

### **Ukraine and the Return of Large-Scale international scaled conflict**

The 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine was the revival of full-scale international armed conflict on the continent of Europe, with attendant egregious human rights violations. Civilians were killed and maimed through indiscriminate shelling, forced into displacement, and raped, and essential infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, and power grids targeted. These are a violation of the rights under the Geneva Conventions, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and other conventions.

The UN General Assembly condemned the aggression in strong terms, as the International Criminal Court (ICC) opened an investigation into war crimes and crimes against humanity. Despite the enforcement challenge, Ukraine has become a test case par excellence for global justice credibility and international commitment to enforcing protection of civilians in conflict.

## **MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED**



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### United States of America

The United States has long positioned itself at the vanguard of promoting human rights during armed conflict, both in practice and policy. It is the largest financial contributor to United Nations peace operations and, as a permanent member of the Security Council, it wields a deciding impact on mandates that focus on civilian protection. At home, the U.S. applies the Leahy Law that denies military aid to foreign units that engage in human rights abuses, resulting in limited atrocities in war areas. In addition, the U.S. humanitarian agencies and NGOs provide bountiful assistance during emergencies, from refugee aid to monitoring war crimes. Although sometimes criticized for selective application, the U.S. remains one of the strongest forces for advancing accountability and human rights standards during war.

### China

China, being a part of the strongest nations in peacekeeping globally, has shown a need to combat human rights violations in conflicts. More specifically she is the second-largest provider of funds for UN peacekeeping missions and one of the largest troop contributors, deploys troops to South Sudan, Mali, Darfur, and Lebanon missions—often to dangerous areas where security for civilians is acutely under threat. China helped to ensure humanitarian assistance and relief and extended vital security to citizens during conflicts, respecting their rights and helping them. As an end it is well known that China when it comes to

### Rwanda

Rwanda's involvement in the reduction of human rights violations during conflicts is shaped by its own past, notably the 1994 genocide. Keen to redefine its global role, Rwanda has been recognized as one of Africa's most trustworthy and admired members of UN peacekeeping forces. The Rwandan army is involved in missions such as (but not limited to) those in South Sudan and the Central African Republic, where it plays a vital role in protecting the civilian's lives and ensuring peace in the region. The country has greatly invested in professionalizing its peacekeepers to the point that it is right now synonymous with efficiency and discipline in war zones. Although Rwanda itself has been criticized for domestic rights issues, its international intervention has made it a trailblazer in conflict-related human rights issues in Africa.

### Switzerland

Switzerland plays a unique role in reducing human rights violations in conflict through diplomacy and humanitarian law rather than armed intervention. Switzerland as the depositary state of the Geneva Conventions ensures that the pillar of international humanitarian law is assured to defend combatants and civilians in conflict. It is also headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the UN Human Rights Council, and Geneva is therefore an international center of conflict resolution and rights protection. Swiss foreign policy is based on neutrality and mediation, and it is therefore a reliable mediator in peace and humanitarian talks. With a focus on institutional support, dialogue, and norms based on law, Switzerland enhances the ability of the international community to prevent abuse in conflict situations.

### African Union (AU)



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The African Union has also become a visible regional organization in reducing human rights violations in times of conflict, especially in the times where most contemporary wars are waged. Through its Peace and Security Council and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the AU created vital measures where the member states must safeguard civilians during war.

In practice, the AU has contributed peace missions in Sudan (Darfur) and Somalia (AMISOM), where African peacekeepers have had considerable successes in protecting populations from harm. While resource and coordination challenges remain, the growing responsibility of the AU shows that regional institutions are capable of making a difference in preventing abuses and building stability in the long term.

### TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT
1945-1946	Nuremberg and Tokyo Tribunals
1948	Universal declaration of human rights
1949	Geneva Conventions
1993	International criminal tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
1994	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)
1998	Adoption of the Rome Statute
2000	UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (Women, Peace and Security)
2002	Establishment of the international criminal court (ICC)
2005	UN Endorsement of Responsibility to Protect (R2P)
2006	UN Security Council Resolution 1674 (Protection of Civilians)
2010	Accountability in ongoing conflicts (Darfur, Syria, Ukraine, Gaza)

### RELEVANT UN TREATIES, CONVENTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

**The Geneva Conventions (1949) and Additional Protocols (1977)**



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The Geneva Conventions are the basis of international humanitarian law, which has the specific purpose of protecting human beings in situations of armed conflict. The four conventions and additional protocols regulate the treatment of prisoners of war, civilians, the wounded, and medical personnel. They prohibit torture, collective punishments, and assaults on non-combatants. The Additional Protocols broadened protection to victims of internal, instead of international, wars, which renders them highly applicable in contemporary civil wars. The Conventions have universal ratification, and all UN member states are therefore bound by law to comply with them, making them the most authoritative document in limiting excesses in armed conflicts.

### **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948)**

While not a legally binding document, the UDHR laid down the principle of the modern human rights regime by proclaiming universal rights such as the right to life, freedom, and security. Adopted by the UN General Assembly in the aftermath of World War II, it set the standard for human dignity in the face of challenges. Its principles have extended to inform binding treaties like the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and serve as a morality tool for state action evaluation in conflict. In war zones, the UDHR forms the foundation for lobbying by UN agencies, humanitarian groups, and NGOs for holding wrongdoers accountable.

### **The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998)**

The Rome Statute has established the International Criminal Court (ICC), which the world's first permanent international court to prosecute individuals on charges of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression. The ICC was adopted in 2002 as a response to the weakness of ad hoc tribunals in addressing mass atrocities. In holding individuals—not states—criminally responsible, the Court seeks to bring an end to impunity and deter future atrocities. Though not universally ratified, its existence strengthens international obligation and is among the most potent tools for reducing human rights violations in conflict situations.

### **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**

Another main framework has been provided by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) through its Protection of Civilians (PoC) agenda. Since 1999, the Council has voted resolutions for better compliance with humanitarian law, endorsing peacekeeping missions with mandates to safeguard civilians, and condemning tactics such as starvation, sexual violence, and attacks on healthcare. Concurrently, international initiatives like the Women, Peace and Security agenda (UNSCR 1325, 2000) and the Children and Armed Conflict agenda (UNSCR 1612, 2005) have brought with them targeted mechanisms for tracking abuses and empowering affected groups during wartime.



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### Major arms related instruments

Major arms-related instruments include the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty (1997), the Convention on Cluster Munitions (2008), and the Arms Trade Treaty (2013). Regionally, the African Union Constitutive Act (Article 4h) is a milestone recognition of a collective right of intervention in situations of extreme gravity like genocide and war crimes.

### PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

#### Geneva Conventions

Throughout the years all countries have made a lot of attempts to reduce human rights' violations in times of conflict, each with a different impact in solving such crucial issues. One of the earliest and most influential developments was the constitution of the Geneva Conventions, starting in 1864 and ending during 1949 with their Additional Protocols. Each accord was being made and managed to protect civilians, prisoners of war, and the wounded during armed conflict. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was the preserver of these settlements, providing monitoring and humanitarian aid in order to support the limit of suffering during conflicts. While various violations occurred, the Geneva Conventions provided the first ever universal framework that armed groups, every citizen and of course governments must respect and follow.

#### International Tribunals and the Birth of International Criminal Justice

A notable effort was following the Second World War with the creation of the Nuremberg and Tokyo Tribunals, which prosecuted leaders for several crimes during the war, such as violations of human rights and crimes of aggression. The trials mentioned above are deemed deeply crucial in the sense that they brought into existence the theory that not only states but individuals can also be criminally liable for atrocities. This model was revitalized in the 1990s through the creation of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). The ICTY prosecuted the perpetrators of genocide and mass killings in the Balkans and the ICTR took care of the genocide in Rwanda. These courts delivered justice to thousands of victims and highlighted that the international community could legally intervene to reduce impunity for human rights abuses. Their impact later gave birth to the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2002, which has continued to prosecute war crimes and crimes against humanity globally.

#### The Role of UN Peacekeeping in Protecting Human Rights

The United Nations organization has also played a major role in attempts to protect human rights and curtail violations against them during periods of conflict. Since 1948, the UN has deployed peacekeeping troops into war zones in Cambodia, Sierra Leone, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Peacekeepers have often been deployed to protect civilians, oversee disarmament, and help troubled governments that arise from conflict. In Sierra Leone, for example, UN peacekeepers played a pivotal role in disarming rebels and monitoring



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elections after decades of heinous civil war marred by mass killings and the use of child soldiers. Peacekeeping has been criticized for limitations and occasional failure, but it has still saved millions of lives by reducing direct violence and creating safer havens for civilians that would suffer the repercussions of conflicts.

### Monitoring and Reporting Human Rights Violations

An also very interesting and important mechanism that was used in such times was about monitoring and reporting. Organizations such as but not limited to that explored and examined abuses and wretched occurrences (some of them being torture, extrajudicial killings, forced displacement and malefic living conditions) were Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the UN Human Rights Council. A great example is of course during the conflicts of Darfur and Syria. More specifically obscene incidents were noticed by these organizations, the result being universal attention being brought to atrocities and the government and the United Nations being pushed to take measures. In the end they may have not stopped the abuses but at least they eliminated the attacks of armed groups on innocent citizens.

### Sanctions, Diplomacy, and Transitional Justice

Additionally, the use of sanctions and diplomacy has been another attempt at containing abuse. The United Nations Security Council has imposed arms embargoes, travel bans, and asset freezes on governments and militias responsible for gross human rights violations. For instance, sanctions against apartheid South Africa in the 1980s, combined with domestic opposition and international pressure, eventually caused political change and termination of institutionalized racial subordination. Sanctions against Liberian and Ivory Coast warlords in their respective civil wars also undercut repressive governments and opened the door for peace negotiations. Lastly, after war, societies have traditionally employed transitional justice to deal with the experience of mass human rights violations. The most cited instance is the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission following the fall of apartheid in the 1990s. The commission gave victims a platform to narrate their experience and perpetrators the chance to confess to their offenses in exchange for amnesty in some cases at the cost of punishment. In Sierra Leone, a hybrid court known as the Special Court combined domestic law and international law to prosecute warlords who used children as soldiers and committed atrocities in the nation's civil war. These efforts, though imperfect as they were, were sincere and real efforts to reduce future transgressions by promoting accountability and breaking cycles of revenge.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

### Strengthening International Monitoring Mechanisms



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The strongest way of deterring human rights violations in conflict regions is through the dispatch of international observer missions. These can be sent by the United Nations, regional organizations, or independent human rights groups. Ground observers can report immediately, provide evidence to international courts, and expose abuse by name and shame, making impunity harder for abusers. The fact alone that there are trained monitors tends to deter armed groups from committing atrocities, as they know their crimes are being recorded. This technique also allows for immediate reporting, which allows the world to respond more quickly and effectively.

### Enforcing International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

International Humanitarian Law, including the Geneva Conventions, provides a legal framework for protecting civilians and limiting the conduct of war. During conflict, state and non-state actors need to be sensitized on IHL, and their violations should have repercussions in the shape of prosecution by international tribunals or national courts with universal jurisdiction. This would require investment in combatant awareness campaigns, clear-cut lines of accountability, and political will within the international community for the breaches to be left unpunished. By asserting that war crimes will not be unpunished, one can create a culture of compliance and thus curtail violations.

### Promoting Inclusive Peace Negotiations

Peace settlements designed in the absence of affected and marginalized communities are more apt to fail to address the root causes of conflict and leave grievances standing, which in turn can mean more resumed abuses. Including women, minority groups, displaced persons, and civil society representatives in peace negotiations makes solutions more legitimate and resilient. Inclusive negotiations allow for human rights protections to be made a part of the settlement itself, so that whatever institutions of government are created after the conflict, they are based on justice and equality. Additionally, mass participation will make it harder for a specific group to monopolize power and to commit specific abuses later on.

### Enhancing the Protection of Civilians

Civilians are typically the primary victims in armed conflicts, subject to indiscriminate attacks, forced displacement, or withholding of vital necessities. Strengthening protection for civilians can include the creation of UN-mandated safe havens, protected corridors of humanitarians for providing aid, and more intense peacekeeping forces in danger zones. Peacekeepers must equip and empower themselves to act decisively to prevent atrocity crimes, not merely observe them. Collaboration between local communities, humanitarians, and peacekeepers plays a crucial role in identifying vulnerable communities and relocating them or shielding them from attacks when there is a surge in fighting.

### Supporting Transitional Justice Mechanisms

When conflicts end without justice, cycles of violence are likely to repeat. Transitional justice tools—truth commissions, special courts, and reparations programs—can help deal



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with past atrocities, hold perpetrators to account, and heal victims' dignity. Transitional justice tools give a clear signal that war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other major abuses are not tolerable. Above all, transitional justice has to be complemented by reconciliation programs among communities to heal social divisions and instill confidence in the new government. Thus, it paves the way for a rights-oriented society capable of withstanding potential strains in the future.

### Strengthening Local Governance and the Rule of Law

During conflict, having functional legal and governance mechanisms available is crucial to guarding rights. International assistance can provide grants, training, and security support to local courts, police, and administration to help them become independent and impartial. The justice institutions at the local level must be empowered to investigate and prosecute even when the offenders are powerful actors. Greater community trust in institutions increases civilian cooperation, complaint reporting, and deterring people from turning to armed groups for protection or justice.

### Increasing International Diplomatic Pressure

The global community has a responsibility to use diplomatic measures to deter and halt violations of human rights in conflict areas. This may include selective sanctions against the perpetrators or perpetrator entities, arms embargoes to cut off supply of weapons, and united action through the UN Security Council or regional institutions. Public condemnations coupled with clandestine negotiations can politically and economically isolate culprits, making it expensive to continue the violations. Diplomacy will also have to be accompanied by incentives—such as aid or political focus—to encourage conformity with human rights standards.

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