

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

Thomas Jefferson Model United Nations Conference

TechMUN XXVI



Middle School Specialized

Co-Chair: Philip Pan

Co-Chair: Kotryna Vismante

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Greetings, delegates!

Welcome to the annual session of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations! We are tasked with developing innovative and viable solutions to eradicate the drug trade in our constituent states and observer nations. ASEAN will approach such a dilemma through an economic and security perspective. As kingpins of the drug trade adapt their enterprises to the actions of the governments, it is imperative that this committee identifies both short-term and long-term solutions to mitigate the issues at hand.

Further, the committee is faced with the constantly developing issues of the Rohingya genocide and refugee crisis. Delegates must decide how to approach the atrocious extrajudicial violence and murder of the Rohingya people, legal discrimination and disenfranchisement within Myanmar law, and how to mitigate the issues of a mass exodus. Considering the scale and pressure of the challenge, quick and decisive action is necessary for the success of this committee session.

Since the founding principles of ASEAN include both cooperation and compromise, states represented within committee are expected to consider resolutions that benefit not only their respective nation, but also the overall interests of the organization. We're looking forward to hearing your thoughts on these critical issues!

Best,

Philip Pan and Kotryna Vismante

Co-Chairs, Association of Southeast Asian Nations

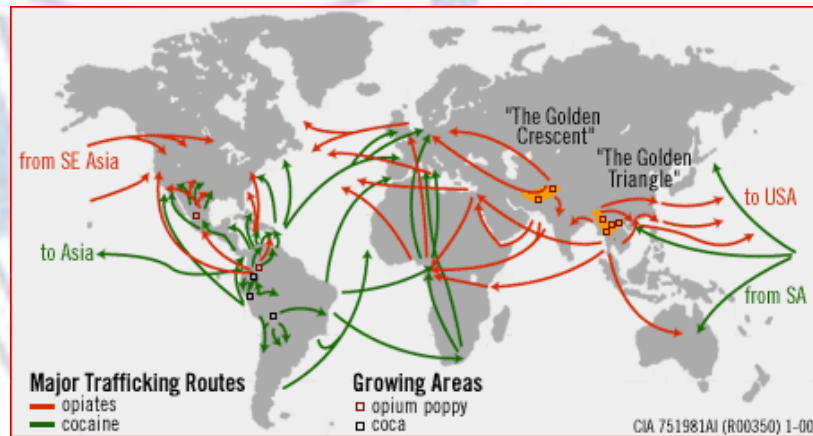
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Topic 1: The Golden Triangle Opium Production

Opium

Opium, derived from a fluid produced by unripe poppy seed pods, has grown to become the basis for lucrative drug trades around the world. Opium latex contains approximately 12% of analgesic morphine, which can be processed through chemical means to produce heroin, a highly potent and dangerous narcotic, and other synthetic opioids which account for the vast majority of international drug networks.^{1, 2}



The extraction of such morphine enables traffickers to make the illegal trade of opium profitable, as it reduces the bulk weight of the drug by 88% while increasing profits by two to four times. Despite different methods of synthesis and production around the world, in Southeast Asia, opium is procured through a 8-step process, involving distillation, chemical modification, and potency adjustment.

History

The trafficking and use of opium dates back to 3400 BC, first cultivated by the Sumerian civilization in Lower Mesopotamia, spreading through the first primitive trade routes to Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt. Although “indigenous” to Southeast Asia, recreational usage of

¹ Booth, Martin. “A Brief History of Opium.” *Opium Timeline*, www.opioids.com/timeline/.

² “Opium throughout History.” *PBS*, Public Broadcasting Service, 14 Feb. 2015, www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/heroin/etc/history.html.



opium poppies was introduced to the Golden Triangle by means of Dutch traders in the early 18th century, representative of the strong European influence in the Indian Ocean Trade Routes through the establishment of Joint-Stock Companies.³

Soon after recreational opium consumption took flight in Asia, Britain quickly obtained multiple trade partnerships with China, the main Asian power during the late 18th century, through financial incentives and other advantageous agreements.⁴ However, due to the trade deficit within the Indian Ocean, with high demand in Britain for Chinese and other Asian goods, and little demand for British goods in China, British merchants were forced to complete transactions with gold and silver, rather than through barter and trade.

In order to compensate for the outflow of gold and silver, British merchants commercialized the sale of opium in hopes of generating large amounts of cash through its highly addictive properties. Seeing the looming situation, the Qing Imperial Dynasty outlawed non-medicinal opium use, eventually banning opium and poppy cultivation in its entirety in 1799. The subsequent Opium Wars in 1842 and 1860, culminating with a British victory against China, forced China to legalize opium, which allowed for the expansion of the opium trade upon the arrival of British forces in Lower Burma in 1852.

After 3 decades, the British Empire expanded into Upper Burma, including the modern state of Myanmar, a decision which resulted in a massive economic boost in the opium trade. However, as the consumer base expanded, the ability for the British to retain a monopoly on

³ Chin, Ko-Lin. *The Golden Triangle: Inside Southeast Asia's Drug Trade*. 1st ed., Cornell University Press, 2009. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt7zj68.

⁴ Moodley, Kiran. "Welcome to the Golden Triangle, the centre of the world's drug trafficking." *The Independent*, Independent Digital News and Media, 11 Mar. 2015, www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/welcome-to-the-golden-triangle-the-centre-of-the-worlds-drug-trafficking-10100420.html.

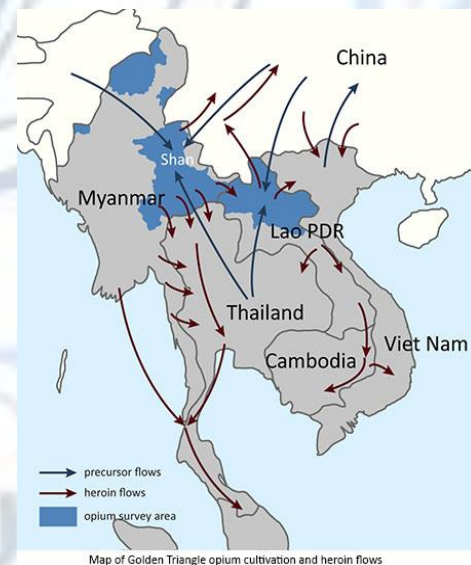


the production of opium decreased, inversely proportional to the increased opportunities for smuggling. For the next century, opium trade flourished in SouthEast Asia, reaching out as far as the golden crescent, another area of high drug trafficking today.

In 1949, after the Communist Army of China, led by Mao ZeDong, defeated the Chiang Kai-Sheks, or the Nationalist Army at the time, many of the Chinese Kuomintangs uprooted to the Thai-Burmese border looking for efficient ways to make money. The Kuomintangs eventually decided to invest heavily into the production and distribution of narcotics throughout the area, denoting the inception of the Golden Triangle.⁵ The Golden Triangle obtained its worldwide infamy for opium and heroin production during the Vietnam War, by means of the ever increasing market for narcotics and CIA investments to fund secrets missions and wars in Laos. Such actions ultimately led to significant expansion of the Golden Triangle drug trade until the late 1980's.

Current Situation

In the 21st century, the border regions between Thailand, Myanmar and Laos have been collectively referred to as the Golden Triangle. The Golden Triangle is a region situated in SouthEast Asia covering 367,000 square miles where a significant portion of the world's opium supply has been produced since ancient times.⁶ Its



⁵ Conboy, Kenneth. "Extending the Drug War to the Golden Triangle." *The Heritage Foundation*, www.heritage.org/crime-and-justice/report/extending-the-drug-war-the-golden-triangle.

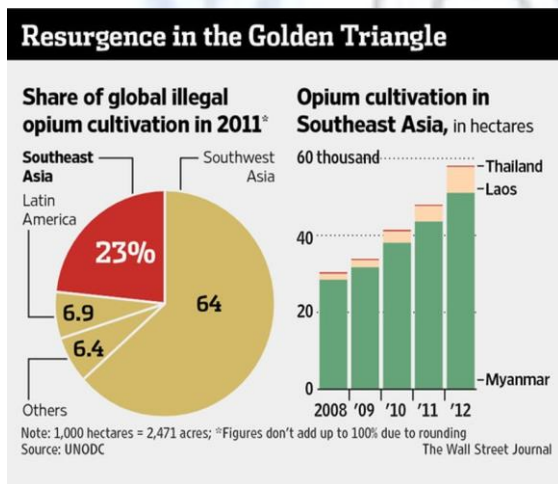
⁶ Goldberg, Jacob. "What and Where Is the Golden Triangle?" *ThoughtCo*, 17 Mar. 2017, www.thoughtco.com/the-golden-triangle-1434569.



mountainous terrain and relative isolation from major urban centers have enabled the Golden Triangle to become an ideal location for illicit poppy cultivation and transnational opium smuggling.

During the past decade, governments whose nations are deeply intertwined within the Golden Triangle have attempted to deal with the dilemma of poppy production through several different methods. In Thailand, cultivation of poppies has been completely prohibited, with such legislation being particularly effective in the Northern provinces. Furthermore, the construction of many new roads and airports in Northern Thailand has made it easier for the police and military to exercise effective patrolling practices in the region. In the nation of Laos,

lack of infrastructure and slow economic growth has allowed for the proliferation of opium production pathways.⁷ Despite progress in the reduction of opium trade in many nations, the aforementioned restrictions have caused Myanmar to become the biggest opium producer in the Golden Triangle, illustrating a highly delicate situation.



A United Nations report released in December of 2017 revealed that opium production in the Golden Triangle had tripled since 2006, with the illegal drugs trade in the region valued at \$16.3 billion.⁸ In 2014, the Golden Triangle produced 762 tons of opium and 76 tons of heroin, showing a worsening situation which demands an international response. Regardless of

⁷ Prabang, Luang. "Mekong Officials Gather to Address the Golden Triangle Opium Economy." *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, 22 Nov. 2016, www.unodc.org/southeastasiaandpacific/en/2016/11/golden-triangle-opium-economy/story.html.

⁸ Heijmans, Philip. "UN: Opium harvests soaring in Southeast Asia." *News | Al Jazeera*, Al Jazeera, 8 Dec. 2014, www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2014/12/un-opium-harvests-soaring-southeast-asia-201412784951830740.html.



the several attempts to eradicate the cultivation of opium poppies in the Golden Triangle, better transport infrastructure and an increasing consumer base in surrounding nations have elevated production in the past five years.⁹

Overall Effects

Because of the seclusion of the Golden Triangle opium cultivation, many social effects of opium facilitation are relatively unknown to the international community. However, in countries affected by its cultivation, citizens have begun to realize that the social costs of opium farming are immense, including heavy addiction and a lazy-spaced population. Moreover, slash and burn agriculture essential to opium production have resulted in severe soil degradation and heavy deforestation in nations home to opium. Moreover, the botanical structure of opium poppies deplete soil nutrients at an expedited rate, which has led to nomadic movements of tribes engaging in the cultivation of opium once the soil of a certain location has been exhausted.

On a more political perspective, opium production in the Golden Triangle continues to be the source of funding for military operations of several separatist group within the area. Perhaps the largest of these groups is the United Wa State Army (UWSA), a force of 20,000 troops stationed within the semi-autonomous Wa Special Region. Founded upon the cultivation of opium, the UWSA as well as the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army have expanded their drug industries to the synthesis of methamphetamines, which are easier

⁹ Nopparat, Chaichalearmmongkol. "Opium Production on the Rise in Southeast Asia, Led by Myanmar." *Wall Street Journal*, 18 Dec. 2013.



and cheaper to manufacture than heroin.¹⁰

Because of the dire financial situations in many of the involved states, including the majority of ASEAN constituents, nearly all citizens in affected regions participate in the drug trade in some manner, supporting the argument that drug production is a crucial component of the development of these regions, as it is a clear alternative to poverty. As mentioned earlier, many policies have been implemented to take on the Golden Triangle opium production. However, provided a context in which localized agriculture and small-scale entrepreneurship are stunted by regional conflicts and competition with supranational corporations, local communities have ultimately relied upon the opium trade for economic development.¹¹

Previous Action

Last year, the nations of China, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand launched a joint program to curb the illicit trafficking of drugs, realizing that international unity and collaboration is the only way to address such a complex issue as drug cultivation. Termed the Safe Mekong Coordination Centre (SMCC), the program has helped to coordinate investigations among all four countries, with reports of nearly 600 arrests along with the resolution of over 590 drug-related cases. To date, the SMCC says that they have seized 71kg of heroin, 38kg of methamphetamine, 1.2kg of opium and 4.12m amphetamine tablets. It is important to continue the success of these regional partnerships and extend it to a larger, globalized scale.¹² Thus, this

¹⁰ "Southeast Asia Opium Survey 2014: Lao PDR, Myanmar." *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*, United Nations, www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/sea/SE-ASIA-opium-poppy-2014-web.pdf.

¹¹ "Narcotic Superhighways: The Top 5 Routes for Drug Trafficking." *OCGRP*, 22 Feb. 2013, www.ocgrp.org/index.php/en/component/content/article/16-other-articles/1843-narcotic-superhighways-the-top-5-routes-for-drug-trafficking.

¹² "Golden Triangle Narco-Gangs Churning out New Highs, UN Warns." *Daily Mail Online*, 1 June 2017, www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-4562082/Golden-Triangle-narco-gangs-churning-new-highs-UN-warns.html.



committee should take steps to engender these developments throughout all ASEAN member and observer states affected by the cultivation and trafficking of opium.

Questions to Consider

- 1) What methods can be taken to stop the trafficking of opioids throughout the international community?
- 2) How can nations prevent the production and synthesis of Golden Triangle drugs?
- 3) What can be done to guarantee the safety of innocent civilians and prevent their forced involvement in illicit enterprises?
- 4) How can we address the impoverished financial situations at hand to prevent the expansion of the Golden Triangle drug trade?
- 5) Who should be held responsible for the proliferation of the Golden Triangle network?
- 6) How can nations spread awareness about the health effects of the opium drug trade as well as deter civilian involvement?

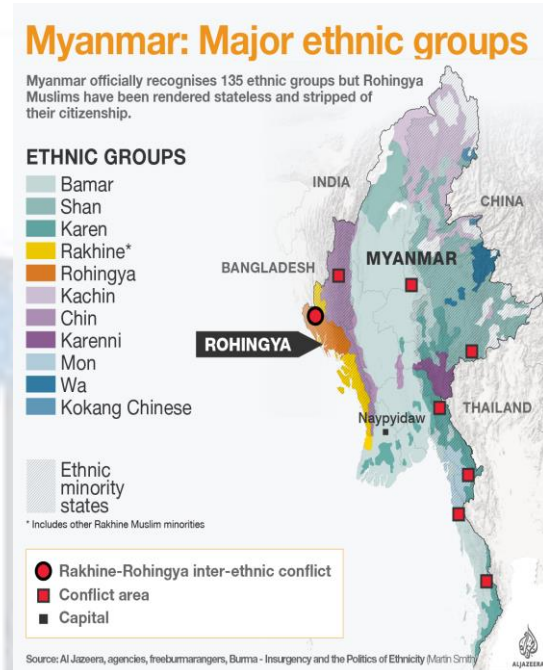
Helpful Links

1. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/welcome-to-the-golden-triangle-the-centre-of-the-worlds-drug-trafficking-10100420.html>
2. <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-golden-triangle-1434569>
3. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2014/December/opium-production-in-the-golden-triangle-continues-at-high-levels--threatening-regional-integration.html>
4. <https://www.unodc.org/southeastasiaandpacific/en/2016/11/golden-triangle-opium-economy/story.html>
5. <https://www.deamuseum.org/ccp/opium/production-distribution.html>

Topic 2: The Rohingya Genocide and Refugee Crisis

History of Disenfranchisement

The Rohingya people are a minority ethnic group residing in the western Rakhine state of Myanmar, with an estimated population of 1 million in 2015.¹³ The Rohingya are majority Muslim, although with a Hindu minority, and speak the unique Rohingya (or Ruaingga) dialect. They are thought to be descendants of internal migrants of the British imperial territory during the 19th and early 20th century, when the Burmese (now Myanmarese) territory did not restrict migration between India and Bangladesh.



However, the sovereign state of Myanmar, after declaring independence in 1948, refused to recognize the Rohingya as an indigenous ethnic group or citizens under the Union Citizenship Act,¹⁴ instead referring to the people as 'Bengalis'. The plight of Rohingya citizenship worsened over the subsequent regimes, culminating in the 1982 citizenship laws that required formal documentation of ancestral residence, which most did not have, or fluency in an official language of Myanmar, of which Rohingya was not included, to be naturalised. These harsh standards rendered the Rohingya practically stateless, restricting their access to suffrage, education, jobs, healthcare, and public services, including the court systems. Discrimination

¹³ http://www.fortifyrights.org/downloads/Yale_Persecution_of_the_Rohingya_October_2015.pdf

¹⁴ <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/08/rohingya-muslims-170831065142812.html>



towards the Rohingya also comes as a generalized islamophobia in the majority Buddhist nation, including the government's decree to destroy unauthorized mosques¹⁵ and failure to prevent the attacks on Muslim Myanmarians.

Displacement and Maltreatment

In 1978, Myanmar's military operation Dragon King targeted groups deemed to be illegal immigrants, specifically the Rohingya. The result of the military mistreatment and abuse was a 200,000 refugee influx into closest neighbor Bangladesh, where the refugees were not welcomed. Instead, the Bengali government's suppression of resources led to 12,000 starvation-related deaths of Rohingya men, women, and children.¹⁶ Upon international condemnation and pressure, the refugees were repatriated into Myanmar, but conditions and treatment did not improve. By Myanmar law, all land is government-owned, with citizens granted free use, meaning the stateless Rohingyas lands may be confiscated at any point, which it often is to force Rohingya migration. Furthermore, the Myanmar Ministry of Border Affairs' task force, the Nay-Sat Kut-kwey ye (NaSaKa), along with the army and police, forced manual labor without compensation or a hefty daily fee onto impoverished Rohingya communities. Consequences of disobedience to the NaSaKa authorities are as extreme as death and beatings.¹⁷

Outbreaks of Violence

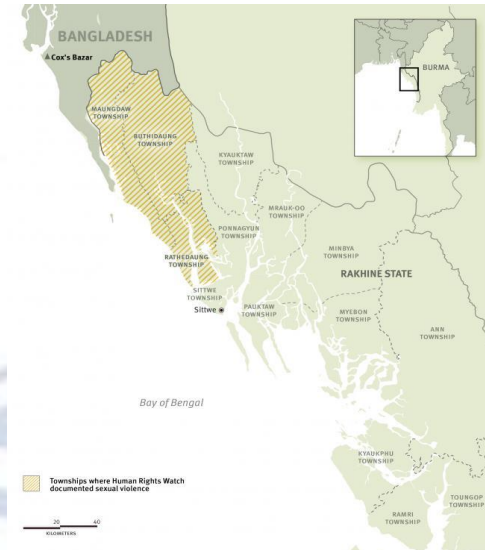
In 2012, hostility between Rakhine and Rohingya populations in four townships in

¹⁵ Human Rights Watch, Crackdown on Burmese Muslims, p. 11 (July 2002), https://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/asia/burmese_muslims.pdf; Human Rights Watch, Burma: Rape, Forced Labor and Religious Persecution in Northern Arakan, p. 17 (1992), <http://www.hrw.org/reports/pdfs/b/burma/burma925.pdf>.

¹⁶ http://www.fortifyrights.org/downloads/Yale_Persecution_of_the_Rohingya_October_2015.pdf

¹⁷ U.N. Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/7/18 (2008), para. 60.

Rakhine resulted in a period of rioting, gang violence, arson, and the displacement of about 90,000 civilians on both sides of the conflict, as well as at least 89 deaths.¹⁸ More recently, on August 25th, 2017, militants of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), insurgents in support of Rohingya rights, killed 12 Myanmarese border officials in response to the limits placed on Rohingya movement.¹⁹ This event acted as a catalyst for the genocide and mass exodus to follow.



Genocide, Ethnic Cleansing, and Crimes Against Humanity

Article II of the United Nations Genocide Convention defines genocide as: [A]ny 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.²⁰

Points a and b have been repeatedly fulfilled systematically, by the Myanmarese military

¹⁸<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/about-75000-rohingyas-in-myanmar-camps-refugee-international/article3948606.ece>

¹⁹ <https://www.cnn.com/2017/09/12/asia/arsa-rohingya-militants-who-are-they/index.html>

²⁰ <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%2078/volume-78-i-1021-english.pdf>



employing extrajudicial violence and punishment, arbitrary arrests, sexual violence, and torture. The army has employed mass arson to raze entire Rohingya communities, exacerbating the problem of displacement. Also, regarding point c, the squalid and inhumane conditions of the ghetto-like relief camps, from which human rights organizations are barred, reveal the subhuman treatment of the Rohingya and Myanmar's aversion to minorities. Regarding point d, measures intended to prevent birth, the Rakhine state released a policy document titled "Population Control Measures", which explicitly endorsed forcible injections, pills, and other contraception, as well as a jail sentence up to 10 years for women birthing outside of wedlock, or bearing more than two children when married.²¹ In 2015, these laws were extended to apply nationwide.²²

Sexual Crimes

Often ignored, one of the strategies for the forcible displacement of the Rohingya people by Myanmar soldiers has been rape and sexual crimes. Not only can sexual abuse lead to serious mental and physical damage, as outlined in point c of the definition of genocide, but the humiliating and horrifying memories are now associated with Rohingya homes and villages, deterring the return of their residents. Hundreds of Rohingya girls and women report being mass raped, almost entirely by uniformed members of the Myanmar army, but reporting and punitive action is practically nonexistent.²³

Mass Exodus

²¹ Fortify Rights, *Policies of Persecution: Ending Abusive State Policies Against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar*, pp. 28-9, 36 (Feb. 2014), http://www.fortifyrights.org/downloads/Policies_of_Persecution_Feb_25_Fortify_Rights.pdf.

²² http://www.fortifyrights.org/downloads/Yale_Persecution_of_the_Rohingya_October_2015.pdf

²³ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/11/16/burma-widespread-rape-rohingya-women-girls>

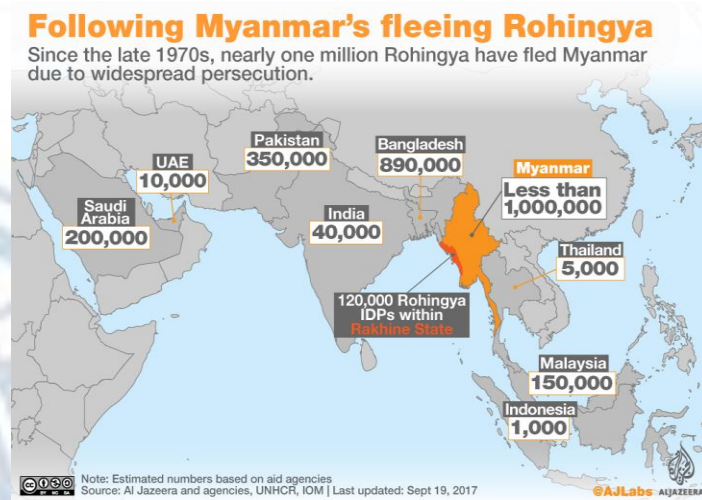
The Rohingya genocide has sparked the largest global refugee crisis since the Rwandan genocide, at a rate of about 120,000 people fleeing per week at the peak.²⁴ The severity of the problem cannot be undermined,

especially to engaged ASEAN states, as Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia have collectively received over 150,000 refugees.²⁵ However, the biggest burden is borne by Bangladesh, forced to accept around 900,000 refugees, double the amount of Rohingya

estimated to remain in Myanmar.²⁶ Not only are the passages dangerous -- fraught with famine, theft, natural disaster, and human trafficking -- but conditions are increasingly unlivable, as resources such as food, water, medicine, and sanitation are extremely strained or unavailable. Even within Myanmar, the razing and mass arson of Rohingya communities caused 120,000 people to become internally displaced, lacking adequate shelter, supplies, or services.

Action and Change

Unfortunately, the government of Myanmar has failed to take responsibility for the actions of their military thus far, or refer to the targeted group as the Rohingya. Although bilateral repatriation plans are in the works, especially between Bangladesh and Myanmar, there has been backlash over the foreseeable failures they will bring. In general, there has been a lack



²⁴ <https://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2017/09/daily-chart-13>

²⁵ Al Jazeera and figure 3

²⁶ *Ibid.*



of any type of specific or decisive action, which is necessary to safeguard the wellbeing of the Rohingya people, as well as the affected political and social stability of the entire Southeast Asian region.

Questions to Consider

- (1) How must the Myanmar government be forced to take responsibility for its actions, and what steps must they take to mitigate the issue internally?
- (2) How can the ASEAN and international community end the genocide, as well as associated forced labor and sexual violence in the region?
- (3) How can the burden of refugees be distributed, and how can safe passage and relief be provided to refugees?
- (4) How must punitive action be taken towards perpetrators of these international crimes against humanity, and whose responsibility is it to persecute them?
- (5) Should the Rohingya be repatriated into Myanmar and granted citizenship? If so, how? If not, where can these communities establish themselves and have the freedom and safety of basic human rights?

Helpful Links

1. http://www.fortifyrights.org/downloads/Yale_Persecution_of_the_Rohingya_October_2015.pdf



Position Paper Requirements

Overview

The Position Paper that delegates will be writing is a culmination of the most important pre-conference research that they have done, acting as a summary of research and the representative view of their state on the issues presented to their respective organ. Position Papers are due, in hard-copy format, before the first committee session on Friday. Any delegate without a Position Paper will be deemed ineligible for awards, so remember to bring a copy for collection, and a copy for personal use! Remember to not plagiarize any aspect of the paper - our chairs and directors will be checking every paper for plagiarism and we expect a full MLA works cited for each. Failure to do so might result in delegate or school delegation disqualification!

Basic Structure

- Times New Roman, 12pt font, single spaced
- A cover page with delegate name, nation, council, school
 - Delegates can add additional details, including national flags, seals, or any symbolic edits to Model United Nations, to demonstrate thoughtful presentation and attention to details.
- One page per topic with titled sections: background, country policy and possible solutions
 - Background: This section should include an overview of the topic. What is the current situation, and what are the main nations affected? This should be the shortest section on the paper.
 - Country Policy: What past actions has your country taken to address the issue at



hand? What does your nation think about the topic? This section should take up a majority of your paper, as delegates should remain representative of their country's view throughout committee

- Possible Solutions: This should be the most interesting part of a delegate's position paper. Solutions should incorporate both research and creativity, with a focus on improving past actions conducted by their respective council. Feel free to come up with unique solutions to the dilemmas at hand which you plan to bring up during committee
- Complete MLA bibliography and in-text citations for all statistics and sources used

Helpful Hints

- Remember to avoid first person pronouns! Staying in character is always important at Model United Nations conferences!
- Always use the active voice!
- Avoid fancy language which can distract your chairs from the true meaning of your paper!
- Remember to remain formal when writing your position paper and try to show all the research that you have done for committee, as this is the first impression that your chairs will have of you!