

Human rights one of those few unique things binding and bestowed on all humans, across borders and all other forms of societal divides. With the hope of creating a world where no man is allowed to develop at the expense of the other's freedoms and liberating the global community in the true sense, the role played by the UNHRC has never been this vital.

UN Human Rights Committee

DIPSMUN 2018

Chairperson: Mayank Agarwal
Vice Chairperson: Prathyush Prashanth

Foreword



United Nations

Dear Participants,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the sixth edition of DiPSMUN.

It is a very humbling moment to see DPS Bangalore South, host one of Bangalore's finest high school Model UN conference with 8 committees and hundreds of delegates in attendance in 2018. DiPSMUN will always hold a particularly sentimental place in my heart as I was on the first ever MUN delegation in 2009 and since then have helped design and chair two previous editions of DiPSMUN. As I have interacted with most of the members of the current Secretariat and Organizing Committee, I can safely say that your coming conference will be one that you will remember.

"Only a Sith deals in absolutes" – Obi Wan Kenobi to Anakin Skywalker, on Mustafar, Star Wars Episode III, Revenge of the Sith.

This quote holds true today more so than ever, as we live in our social media driven echo chambers and thought bubbles, fed by algorithms in one of the most hyperpolarized societies ever. A Model UN Conference is the first step in breaking out. It is one of the best platforms to debate, deliberate, negotiate and come up with some truly innovative solutions to some of the world's biggest challenges and most importantly, see them from a perspective that you haven't yet. Model UN is not just a debate where you show off your bragging rights and get profile pictures for until the next conference (but please make sure you do that!). In my experience it has been a place where you can pick up some key skills such as negotiating, public speaking, analytical thinking and teamwork among a plethora of others that will make you succeed in your professional and personal endeavors in the future.

DiPSMUN 2018, therefore, has been designed to help you, the delegate, find your own voice in the environment that you are most comfortable with. The committees simulated at this conference range from discussing the Mexican Drug War to the very formation of the states of Israel and/or Palestine in the British mandate of Palestine; from solving global inequality to abolishing slavery. When you sit in committee, ensure you intend to walk away with more than just a trophy or a certificate. Ensure you walk away with knowledge and experience, for those will last you longer than a certificate.

Always remember "...that the circumstances of one's birth are irrelevant. It is what you do with the gift of life that determines who you are." – Mewtwo, Mewtwo Strikes back

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shouryadipta Sarkar".

Shouryadipta Sarkar

Analytics and Strategy Consultant

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United Nations Headquarters, New York, NY

Letter From the Chairperson

Dear Delegates,

It is with immense pride that I am given the opportunity to welcome all of you to the sixth, and largest yet, edition of Delhi Public School Bangalore South's Model United Nations Conference, DiPSMUN.

My name is Mayank Agarwal and I will be chairing the United Nations Human Rights Council. An integral organ of the UN, its mandate has been to uphold and carry out the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights while trying to maintain standards of living throughout the world. Its functions, as such, are an integral part of any and all deliberations taken throughout the UN as a whole.

This year, the UNHRC will be discussing the Syrian refugee crisis, one that has spanned nearly six years and is yet to be resolved. Over the course of three days, it is my sincere hope that committee will be able to reach some kind of consensus on what action can be taken, all while blazing a trail with the ideas being proposed in committee. I hope that the discourse will be as enlightening as researching for this agenda will be.

I look forward to spending three days listening to your most unusual yet possibly genius ideas!

Sincerely,
Mayank Agarwal,
Chairperson, UNHRC
DiPSMUN 2018

Abstract

Since the Arab Spring in 2012, there has been an increasing number of people affected by the dissidents' war against the Bashar Al-Assad regime. Although the war itself was not a problem, the consequent rise of the ISIL in the region has created a three-front war, which, coupled with intervention in the form of Russian airstrikes, has created a region of destruction and terror. The war has created not just a large number of refugees, but a large number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) as well. As a result, addressing these large numbers of refugees and IDPs has become a priority for the United Nations.

UNHCR Action

Though IDPs are generally not addressed by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the situation in Syria is so dire that the UNHCR has expanded its mission in Syria to address the protection and needs of IDPs. The Syrian refugee crisis is currently the largest operation ever mounted by the UNHCR. The logistical and financial burdens of refugees is taking a heavy toll on nations surrounding Syria, particularly Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. The Syrian refugees fall under the definition set forth by the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The fact that Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon are not parties of the 1951 Convention has further complicated matters. The UNHCR has been leading the response to the crisis so far, with a more robust action in the Syrian Arab Republic Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan (SHARP). Through SHARP, the Syrian Response Plan (SRP) has brought together 108 UN agencies.

In addition, independent organisations such as the Red Cross have also stepped in with aid to help the UNHCR and the UNHRC address the issue.

Chemical Weapons Controversy and Aftermath

Until 21 August 2013, the warfare implemented on all sides of the Syrian conflict was conventional in nature; that is to say, it was mainly through the use of small arms and light weapons, artillery, and armored warfare on the ground. The Syrian government was known to have possessed some degree of chemical weapons munitions in the past, but early international appraisals of the Syrian conflict specifically condemned the use of such weapons. In late August, however, reports surfaced that such weapons had indeed been used, although on what scale and by what side was contested. According to an investigative committee of the UN, victims of the 21 August attack in the Ghouta area of Damascus reported experiencing artillery shelling followed by uncommon symptoms, which resulted in death or grave illness. These signs were consistent with a chemical weapons attack, and it was indeed the report of the investigative mission in their September 2013 statement to the Secretary General that chemical weapons were deployed against civilians, including children, in the Ghouta area. With this truth established, and other independent verifications of the incident underway, it had become clear to the international community that the Assad administration perpetrated an internationally condemned category of attack against its own civilians. On 14 September 2013, one day after the UN investigative mission's report was made public, United States' President Obama announced that the option of diplomacy had become open in the Syrian Conflict. This was a shocking turn of events following the international outrage over the Assad administration's universally condemned

chemical weapons use. Previously, the only U.S. involvement discussed was limited military engagement or economic sanctions, and the President noted that there was no other recourse because of America's military intimidation of Syria. However, new developments, notably the willingness of Russia and its Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, in organizing talks with the U.S. and Syria, helped encourage the Obama administration. While the U.S. Congress was prepared to vote on the use of military force prior to Russia's proposal, it was through Russia that the United States announced its willingness to attempt a diplomatic solution instead. These trilateral negotiations represented a possible step forward in the solution to the Syrian Civil War, whereby Assad might be tempted to relinquish his chemical weapons in exchange for protection when stepping down as President.

The same day of these trilateral talks, the Assad government ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling, and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction. Also referred to as the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), this major international treaty is the most recent formalization of a global anti-chemical weapons consensus dating back to the Geneva Conventions. The Syrian government's accession to the CWC represented an additional step forward, and the progress culminated in the announcement that the United States and Russia would jointly propose a framework for dismantling Syria's chemical weapons arsenal. Such radical steps forward were poised to ensure the total destruction of Syria's arsenal and open Assad to diplomatic options, a feat that was accomplished in its entirety on 18 August 2014. However, the breakthrough had little effect on the still ongoing civil war, and while it represented the resolution to an international controversy it did little to encourage further diplomacy. It should be noted that the chemical weapons controversy was, in effect, an effort by the United States and Russia to focus the seemingly out-of-control Civil War on a single issue. While the final agreement was a success and Syria is in the process of disarming and destroying its stockpile, the conflict has not abated, and success in one area does not necessarily translate to success in all areas. The LAS will have the experience of past crises on its side when legislating on Syria, and it must recognize that solving only one issue cannot mitigate the conflict.

Current Status

Refugee Crisis and Human Rights Violations Among the most prevalent of the permeating subtopics within the Syrian Civil War is the expanding number of refugees and internally displaced persons. In addition to the previously cited 2.5 million refugees and 4.2 million IDPs, the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria, a branch of the UNHRC, estimates that as of February 2014 more than 250,000 Syrians are besieged and under attack daily. According to UNHCR's figures, there are in total over nine million at-risk civilians as a direct result of the Syrian Civil War, and while a large percentage of those are being assisted by UNHCR, the organization is not all encompassing. As the situation stands, there are no Arab League forces, observer, humanitarian, or otherwise in Syria, and current aid to IDPs is maintained by the UN exclusively. Nearly 1.6 million refugees are concentrated in nearby Lebanon, which shares a large border with southwestern Syria and whose refugee numbers now make up nearly a quarter of the Lebanese population. Most refugees feel they cannot return to their homes, and the economic burden placed on Lebanon by the influx is crippling. UNHCR estimates that it requires an additional USD 1 billion for the continuation of refugee operations; funding that currently is not in the budget. The situation has led many in the international community to cite lack of funds and infrastructure as serious detractors for continuing to host refugees. In addition to the prevalent crisis of refugees, IDPs, and civilians under siege, as well as the lack of resources available to aid them, there is a clear trend of human rights violations that have been reported out of Syria to date. The February 2014 UNHRC report cites slaughter of non-combatants, execution without due process of law, detainment without cause, torture, and gender discrimination as only some of the practices on all sides of the conflict that should be immediately addressed. The report identifies all sides as guilty of a lack of distinction between military and civilian objectives; that is to say, military operations are carried out against combatants and non-combatants alike. Today, the restoration of a legitimate national Syrian government would be capable of containing these ongoing human rights violations. Continuing Prevalence of Extremism Today, as the conflict in Syria rages on, the factionalism that resulted from the momentum and influence it has gathered permeates in extremist elements. Jabhat al-Nusra still operates as the official al Qaeda-endorsed cell group of Syria, but over the past year and a half it has come in contact and clashed

with a rival organization vying for militant supremacy in the conflict zone. The Islamic State, formerly known as ISIS or ISIL (the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria/the Levant), is a transnationally operating insurgency whose stated objective is to establish a 21st century Islamic Caliphate across Iraq and the Levant (modern-day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, and Palestine). Thus far, the organization has gained swathes of territory on the Syria/Iraq border, taking advantage of the growing instabilities of the Syrian Civil War and Iraqi insurgencies to establish a foothold that now includes major cities in both countries, including Iraq's Mosul and Tikrit. While the earliest insurgent operations that would evolve into the Islamic State were originally sponsored by Al Qaeda in U.S.-occupied Iraq, the Islamic State today has moved away from Al Qaeda supported policies and towards a unique extremism that includes the targeting of Shiite cultural sites and various Muslim sects. This disagreement is what fuels the tensions between the Islamic State and al Qaeda supported Jabhat al-Nusra in Syria today. These two major extremist groups are essentially at war, with the Islamic State having assassinated one of JN's primary political leaders in February 2014 and continuing its aggression that same month. Several months later, Islamic State forces captured an oil refinery formerly belonging to JN, absorbing additional resources and escalating the conflict. By June, the Islamic State had firmly established its legitimacy by capturing the major Iraqi city of Mosul, second only to Baghdad in size. The damage to innocent lives must also be taken into account when analyzing this political turmoil. Records of the Islamic State's brutal treatment of civilians are well documented and such brutality may not be contained to Syria. ISIS militants began a series of assaults on a Lebanese town in early August 2014 that ended in their withdrawal but set a frightening precedent for continuing attacks in addition to leaving dozens dead. Whether or not the groups' conflict can be used against them by outside sources is unknown, but the destruction wrought by each group's extremism is absolute. Ultimately, the League must work to prioritize which organization is more threatening as well as in what way their extremist tendencies can be combated. If and when the Islamic State does move beyond the workings of a terrorist movement, the UN may need to entirely readdress how it confronts the group and its leaders. Ongoing Conflict Mitigation Of the past attempted peace solutions for this ongoing crisis, the only one currently enacted is the Geneva II Peace Conference. Proposed in late 2013 and implemented in early 2014, these talks brought together some factions of the conflict and a large number of states with a vested interest in the conflict's peaceful outcome. Major organizers of the conference were the United States and Russia, with the assistance from the UN and the Arab League in bringing together the relevant parties. Multiple rounds of talks are planned, with many completed in early 2014. As the talks stand, they fail to represent the majority of Syrian opposition forces, as the very convening of negotiations with the Assad regime caused the Syrian National Council to drop out in January. As the founding bloc and largest faction within the Syrian National Coalition, the Council's pulling out was a major setback, meaning the negotiations were unlikely to succeed or represent the opinion of all groups participating in the conflict. Despite being aided by new UN Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi, the Geneva II talks thus far have ended in failure on all sides. Following the end of the second round of talks in mid-February 2014, both the Assad regime and Syrian National Coalition representatives expressed frustration at the lack of progress made as a result of the talks.

Stance of European Nations

Although select few European nations have been open to opening their borders to refugees, even among those indigenous populations there exists a lot of stigma and reports of rampant human rights violations in the process. The rise in extremist attacks in European urban centres has also contributed to the anti-Islam rhetoric of these nations, creating further polarisation which has resulted in increased mistreatment and non-integration of these refugees.

Objective of Committee

The onus of protecting the human rights of all these refugees in and from the region lies in the hands of the UNHRC. In addition to merely attempting to make sure that their basic rights are not infringed upon, it is the duty of this committee to ensure that one way or another a way to try and integrate these refugees into society can be achieved.

It becomes important to ensure that the UNHRC goes above and beyond to guarantee these refugees long-term security as short-term solutions only prove to be economic liabilities in the long run. Further, ensuring the security and upholding of human rights within Syria itself among the IDPs in the region should be made a priority, as they are often even more poor than refugees and incapable of defending themselves against militias.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer

1. Creating a framework ensuring the rights of these refugees can be upheld through viable means.
2. How can long-term integration of these refugees into foreign societies be done?
3. Addressing the stigma surrounding refugees due to nationality/ethnicity/religion in Europe.
4. Providing aid and evacuation to IDPs in the regions of war in Syria.
5. Creating a framework for quicker addressing of such crises in the future.