**AMB Model United Nations**



**United Nations Human Rights Council**

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**Chairs:**

**Layan Samhouri**

* **Email:** [**Layan.samhouri@amb.sch.ae**](mailto:Layan.samhouri@amb.sch.ae)

**Zain Swais**

* **Email:** [**Zainswais@gmail.com**](mailto:Zainswais@gmail.com) **page**

**Co-Chair:**

**Amir Abufasheh**

* **Email:** [**Amir.abufasheh@gmail.com**](mailto:Amir.abufasheh@gmail.com)

**Introduction to committee:**

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is a key organ of the United Nations (UN) dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights worldwide. Established on March 15, 2006, the UNHRC operates as an intergovernmental body responsible for advancing the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments. Its efforts aim to foster a world where all individuals can enjoy their fundamental rights, freedom, and basic dignity without discrimination, oppression, or injustice. This is achieved by addressing situations of human rights violations and assessing them with recommendations with the goal of responding to human rights emergencies. While the UNHRC faces challenges and criticisms, its existence underscores the global commitment to upholding and promoting human rights as a cornerstone of international cooperation and peace.

**Background and History:**

Human rights are the fundamental privileges and freedoms that every individual is entitled to, regardless of their race, gender, or any other characteristic. Human rights provide a framework for dignity, equality, and justice in society. However, these rights have been misused by The Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo dates back to the 1990s when it went through two civil wars in 1996 and 1998. The conflict erupted in the wake of the Rwandan genocide in 1994 where ethnic Hutu extremists killed nearly one million civilians of other ethnic minorities. Since then, the eastern DRC, bordering Rwanda, has been facing insurrection committed by several rebel militant groups. According to the UN, more than 120 insurgent groups are active in the eastern provinces of the DRC. Violence by several militant groups over territory and natural resources, extrajudicial killings by security forces and rising tensions with neighbouring countries have killed thousands of innocent Congolese civilians. Tensions between the DRC and neighbouring Rwanda continue to increase as both countries accuse each other of supporting ethnic rebel groups.

The M23 (one of the main rebel groups in the DRC) emerged in 2012 and was primarily active in the eastern part of the country and were mainly accused of numerous human rights abuses. The United Nations has condemned the actions of the M23 and designated them as a negative actor in the conflict. In November 2022, a ceasefire was mediated between the DRC and Rwanda; however, it failed after the M23 rebels announced non-compliance. The East African Force and the UN peacekeeping force, which were deployed to oversee the withdrawal of the rebel groups, failed to achieve their objectives.

The armed groups have been supported by the governments of Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi at various points, acting as proxies for each country’s interests in the region. All of these have led to the humanitarian crisis. According to the Kivu Security Tractor, this year alone, 1,400 people were killed and over 600 attacks were reported in the region. According to the World Food Programme (WFP), the crisis has left more than 1.1 million people in need of food support across North and South Kivu. An additional 600,000 people were forced to flee their homes in 2022, bringing the number of internally displaced people nationwide to nearly 6 million, more than in any other African country, and up from 5.5 million in 2021. Armed groups continued their targeted attacks against internally displaced people in eastern DRC, killing hundreds of people and injuring many others, while further displacing tens of thousands. **Past Actions:**

Helping the Democratic Republic of the Congo is not only a moral imperative, but also serves the self-interest of countries by promoting regional stability and a responsible resource management.

A variety of organizations and and countries have taken action in order to assist the Democratic Republic of the Congo. An Inter-Agency Standing Committee system-wide scale-up for eastern DRC was activated in June 2023. A month later, 24 UN organizations came together to call for prompt action to safeguard women and girls that have been affected during this crisis. The UNHCR declared a statement that in 2024, community-based protection, health, education and livelihoods will remain key priority response areas, and UNHCR will continue to play a leadership and advocacy role in the Protection.

Shelter and non-food items, as well as camp coordination and management clusters, are available in the DRC. The organization will specifically strengthen gender-based violence prevention, risk reduction and response systems, gender equality, and the rights of the forcibly displaced. UNHCR will also work to ensure that at least 60% of IDPs and all IDP returnees have access to adequate shelter.

The International Rescue Committee provides vital support to Congolese who are struggling to recover from decades of conflict, ongoing violence. This organizations goal is to aid Congolese civilians whose lives have been utterly destroyed by the violence and to gain control of their future. The IRC first began working in Congo in 1996, providing emergency assistance and humanitarian aid to those affected and have also worked with local communities to help them rebuild and to create education and health care programs.

Doctors Without Borders is another charity that is leading the medical charge by operating in some of the most dangerous regions of the DRC and providing both physical and psychological care to the people in the war-torn eastern area of the country. They also provide other life-saving necessities (such as water and cooking kits) to people in the areas they are in.

In a promising move, both Rwanda and the DRC agreed in late November to a pact negotiated by the United States to bilaterally reduce military presence on their shared border, reduce hate speech, and refrain from efforts to affect one another’s political systems.

**Current situation:**

Historically, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has experienced violence and extensive abuses of power. Protracted civil wars coupled with the continued mismanagement of state resources have placed DRC among the group of fragile states with the world’s poorest infrastructure. The government has noticeably been ineffective in granting its civilians the fundamental privilege of decent human rights. Although the government has tried to put forth solutions to eradicate the issue, it seems to be that this matter is ceaseless and has gotten out of control.

To this day, The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has been marred by severe human rights abuses, leading to dire consequences for its people including mass killings in the context of armed conflict and inter-communal violence(by rebel groups), serious government corruption; government restrictions on or harassment of domestic and international human rights organizations; issues with the independence of the judiciary; arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy; restrictions on free expression and media, including unjustified arrests or prosecutions of journalists and censorship. War crimes have also been a severe issue in Congo.

In a recent incident in 2022, the Rwanda-backed M23 rebels in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo have committed unlawful killings, rape, and other apparent war crimes such as murder and torture. These war crimes have killed and injured civilians, damaged infrastructure, and exacerbated an already dire humanitarian crisis, and unfortunately, one million civilians have been displaced since. By October 2022, 1338, people including children were killed in these eastern provinces. Again, On November 29, 2022, in a horrific display of violence, M23 fighters systematically targeted men, women, and children, killing at least 20 men and subjecting at least 66 women and girls to rape, including gang rape. The United Nations in DRC estimates a much higher number of 170 people killed. These attacks left communities in shock and despair, and survivors continue to grapple with the physical and emotional scars of this violence.

The Democratic Republic of Congo has acknowledged the severity of the lack of human rights within the country therefore started working on eradicating the difficulties by enforcing laws and working with several organizations to ensure the safety of all civilians.

**Questions that the Committee and Resolutions Should Address**

1. **Immediate Intervention:** What specific immediate actions can be outlined in the resolution to address the escalating humanitarian crisis and protect the rights of internally displaced people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo?
2. **Peacekeeping Strategy:** How can the resolution enhance the effectiveness of peacekeeping forces, such as the East African Force and the UN peacekeeping force, to ensure the successful withdrawal of rebel groups and prevent further violence?
3. **Accountability Mechanisms:** What measures can be established within the resolution to hold accountable both rebel groups and governments accused of supporting them for human rights abuses and violations?
4. **Humanitarian Aid Coordination:** How can the resolution facilitate better coordination and distribution of humanitarian aid to address the immediate needs of the affected population, with a focus on food support, shelter, and medical assistance?
5. **Long-term Stability:** What strategies can be outlined in the resolution to address the root causes of the conflict and promote long-term stability, development, and respect for human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo?
6. **International Collaboration:** How can the resolution encourage sustained international collaboration to address the multifaceted challenges in the region and prevent the recurrence of similar crises in the future?

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