**Committee**: Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee

**Country**: United States of America

**Delegate**: Robert Sunnucks

**Topic A:** The rights of activists and border security

The rights of activists and border security is an issue that is of utmost importance to us. The work of activists to help people is noble and to ensure their safety is something we obviously agree with, but the laws of a nation apply to all, including those in humanitarian work. As such, they should be held liable to any criminal activities committed, for example the littering caused by the NGO ‘No More Deaths’and their harbouring of undocumented immigrants (1).

Having said that, we believe that those who are helping people in need deserve support, so as such, the United States of America is strong in its stance that humanitarian organisations are to be assisted in their work by the appropriate governmental organisation. Through this, the NGOs should be under supervision, with rules outlining how they may act.

It is important, however, that any rules placed on humanitarian work do not oppose helping those in need. The USA is proud to support its NGOs, and our regulations are “designed to facilitate and support the formation of non-governmental organizations” and to avoid discriminating against their ideologies (3).

We believe that restrictions of NGOs should only be done if necessary. Mostly we are focused on “working with multilateral organisations and promoting best practices in humanitarian response” (3). In the USA, this can be done by strengthening the powers of the pre-existing Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration to oversee and sometimes assist NGOs, as well as ensuring they follow the law - with assistance from the pre-existing border guards in cases at our borders. We also see governmental assistance as key in dealing with negligence with regards to the aid, rescue and transport of migrants.

We believe these standards should be globally enforced by all member states of the United Nations. Failure by a government to engage productively with NGOs should be looked down upon. As the nation who is the largest provider of humanitarian assistance worldwide (3), we shall encourage others to contribute more, and work closer with the NGOs without over-restricting them. Internationally, NGOs should make sure that they are following the laws of both the country they are in and the country they are based out of.

To conclude, the United States of America believes that humanitarian work should be fully liable to prosecution should they break any laws and should be tried accordingly. However, countries should not impose laws that prevent these workers from helping those who need it but should instead work with organisations in achieving a better future for all.

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**Committee:** Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee

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**Topic B:** The Role of Religion in a globalised world

The United States of America is firm in its belief of freedom of religion, as outlined in the first amendment of the US constitution (1) and sees secularism as the only way to ensure this. We believe that while it is important to understand one another - including understanding other religious beliefs, religious institutions have no place in global governance, for religion is a private affair as outlined in the first amendment where it states: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion” (1). As such secular diplomacy must remain in place.

Giving religious institutions a place in the UN would go against the very foundations of both the UN and the USA, by breaching the freedom of religion that we stand for. The Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief states that “Discrimination between human beings on the grounds of religion or belief constitutes an affront to human dignity and a disavowal of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations” (2). By including religious institutions in the UN, we would be forced to exclude some religious groups – discriminating against them, besmirching the UN Charter.

It is not religion itself, but an increase in fanatical religiosity that has caused many problems, and the USA knows this all too well. Terrorists are using religion as a weapon against our people and committing horrendous acts on our soil. Most deaths from terrorist attacks in our country were motivated by religious ideologies (3). We see secularisation as a solution to this.

It should be the mission of the United Nations to promote secular humanism around the world, so that all may have a greater understanding of other beliefs. This is how we can prevent religious fundamentalism and radicalisation – if the people of the world can understand each other, they will learn the bond we all share as people, dissuading them from this radicalisation that has led to terrorist activities in our nation.

The UN contains a vast array of countries, with their own cultures, and not to acknowledge this would be insane. However, the current system that preserves the freedoms of the people should be kept. Regardless of culture, all people have rights, and to allow them to be violated based on them being from a different civilisation is unjust. As such, no reform is needed.

It is vital for the rights of an individual to be upheld, and if a religious tradition is to violate such rights, then it is to be looked down upon and changed to not violate these rights.

To conclude, the USA is strong in our stance of utilising secular humanism and secular diplomacy as the way forward in this world plagued by fanatical religiosity and terrorism.

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