



# SPSMUN

## Issue Briefing Pack





# Security Council

## Topic 1:

### The Question of the North Korean Nuclear Missile Crisis

*An increasingly aggressive North Korea, building up their stock of fledgling nuclear weapons, vs an aggressive United States that promises 'fire and fury' if North Korea does not stop threatening nuclear war. What could go wrong?*

**What's the background to the current situation?**

In order to understand how North Korea has become the nuclear-happy and isolationist nation that it is today, one must look to the past to understand how the nation reached this situation. It was formed after 1945, placed under Soviet control and immediately became a socialist state. Following an attempt by North Korea to invade the South, the Korean War ensued, which further divided the North and South of Korea (despite a ceasefire in 1953, no official peace treaty was ever signed).

Following this episode, the Soviet Union began to fund the development of the Yongbyon Nuclear Research Center, sparking the beginning of North Korea's drive towards becoming a nuclearized state. The past two North Korean dynasties in particular have prioritised the rapid development of these nuclear missiles to protect from the perceived threat of America-led "Western imperialism" taking over North Korea and toppling the government.

In its ideology, North Korea follows a strand of militant socialism and isolationism that is aimed at dismissing "Western" capitalist values of liberal democracies as evil and immoral, while simultaneously elevating North Korea's leaders to god-like status. The state's official ideology is known as the Juche, promoting Confucianism, Cheondoism and a form of 'submissive' Christianity, and emphasises the importance of hierarchies and ultra-nationalism. The nation is widely perceived as having the worst human rights record of any nation in the world; the North Korean population is strictly censored, with tight restrictions on political, economic and social freedoms. Arbitrary detention, torture and political imprisonment is rife in the nation, with those deemed critical of the state in any way transported to brutal labour camps.

### **The current situation**

North Korea has developed nuclear weapons, but their exact stockpile is unknown; estimates state that the nation has fewer than 10 plutonium warheads, and some 1,000 ballistic missiles with a range of up to 7,400 miles. It is uncertain as to whether a nuclear missile fired by North Korea would be able to reach the United States. In the US, President Trump has taken a significantly more hardline stance towards North Korea than his predecessors, promising 'fire and fury' if the nation continued building its stockpile of nuclear weapons and repeatedly raising the potential of armed conflict. While Trump has recently softened his stance, encouraging North Korea to enter diplomatic talks with the aim of 'denuclearising' tensions between the West and North Korea have reached the highest levels that they ever arguably been. North Korea has dismissed the proposition of diminishing its nuclear arsenal, insisting that it is crucial in protecting against the expansion of American imperialism.

The UN, meanwhile, has passed ever tightening trade restrictions on North Korea, with resolutions both in March 2017 and 2018 beginning to cut North Korea from the oil and banking sector. These UN declarations have been supported unilaterally by member states.

### **Stakeholders:**

#### ***The United States and its allies:***

From an American perspective, the threat of North Korean nuclear missiles is the most daunting perspective out of any conflict in the world today. Similar worries apply to US allies located near North Korea, including Japan and South Korea, with fears that North Korea could strike at any moment.

#### ***North Korea, China and sympathisers***

China is the nation that has by far the most prominent relation with North Korea, making up 82% of North Korea's exports and 85% of their imports. China's worst fear is a timeline where an aggressive United States removes the North Korean dictatorship from power and sets up a democratic, militarized US-allied state on the Chinese border. Consequently, the nation is hesitant to cut aid to North Korea. Nevertheless, North Korea's aggressive statements have been seen as an embarrassment and China has been willing to impose limited sanctions in 2017, including restrictions on oil imports, possibly to persuade North Korea to moderate its policy, or possibly only to suggest that it is trying to take action of some kind.

#### ***Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons rebels***

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which came into force in 1970, permits only the United States, Russia, the UK, France and China to have control of nuclear weapons. 191 nations have signed this treaty; however, India, Pakistan and Israel, three nations suspected of holding nuclear weapons, have not joined, and neither has North Korea. There's a worry with smaller nations who are not formally ratified to hold nuclear weapons that any crackdown on North Korea would result in efforts to limit or entirely ban their nuclear supply (thus tightening the monopoly on nuclear weapons held by "The Big Five").

### **Potential questions to ask for resolution-writing**

Do you sympathise with a North Korean or "Western" take on matters revolving around how to solve North Korea's nuclear missile crisis? Or is neither approach appropriate?

If you believe that North Korea's nuclear weapons programme should be stopped or pushed back, what solutions do you support? Potential remedies include:

- Pressuring further cutting of North Korea from international banking and trade (**Pro: Economic suffocation, Con: Very long term strategy**)
- Attempting to pursue further attempts to convince China to limit its ties with North Korea (**Pro: if successful, could hold the key to end of North Korean economy, Con: China seems steadfastly unwilling to drastically alter its relationship with North Korea**)

- Non nuclear attacks- this can involve strategic air strikes on nuclear bases (**Pro: Rapidly negates the threat that North Korea's nuclear program ostensibly shows, Con: it is highly unlikely that all of North Korea's nuclear store would be destroyed, and any response by the North Korean government could lead to nuclear war**)
- Nuclear strike against North Korea- it is believed that, in the current moment, the United States maintains a first strike advantage over South Korea (**Pro: Quickest way of removing the threat of North Korea, Con: It is uncertain that there is first strike advantage over North Korea, and so could precipitate nuclear winter. Also there is a moral question, as millions of innocent North Koreans would lose their lives**)
- Covert action- for example, over 100,000 copies of "The Interview" in DVDs or thumb drives were flown into North Korea by helium balloon. An attempt to limit the 'brainwashing that many in the Western World have taken as a symbol of North Korean authoritarianism, and precipitate potential rebellion in North Korea (**Pro: Eats away at North Korea's isolationism and ultra-nationalist psyche without violent action, Con: Unlikely to spur mass rebellion, very long term approach**)

### Further Reading

- "North Korea." Nuclear Threat Initiative - Ten Years of Building a Safer World. CNS, Mar. 2017. Web. 19 July 2017.
- Shim, Elizabeth. "North Korea Defector Launches News of Otto Warmbier near DMZ." UPI. UPI, 21 June 2017. Web. 19 July 2017.
- Lerner, Mitchell. "Markets, Movies, and Media: The Growing Soft Power Threat to North Korea." *The Journal of East Asian Studies* 29.1 (2015): 41-70. JSTOR. Web. 15 July 2017.
- Habib, Benjamin. "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons Programme and the Maintenance of the." *The Pacific Review* 24.1 (2011): 43-64. Taylor and Francis. Web. 15 July 2017.
- Dearden, Lizzie. "Park Sang-hak: The Man Trying to Liberate North Korea Using Balloons." *The Independent*. Independent Digital News and Media, 31 Dec. 2014. Web. 19 July 2017.
- Park, Madison. "How Choco Pie Infiltrated North Korea's Sweet Tooth." CNN. Cable News Network, 27 Jan. 2014. Web. 19 July 2017.
- Jin-sung, Jang. "The Market Shall Set North Korea Free." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 26 Apr. 2013. Web. 19 July 2017.

### Topic 2:

#### The Question of the possibilities for radical geopolitical changes in the Middle East

**Many blamed the instability of the region on its geopolitics. Now after many years of conflict against "ISIS/ Daesh", the end is finally in sight. If the claim is accurate, what potential action can the UN Security Council take to eliminate the root causes to ensure long term stability and prosperity in the Middle East?**

### Abstract

*Looking at the possibilities for redrawing borders and the creation of new states in the Middle East post "ISIS/Daesh" to prevent future instability. This includes the Sunni-Shia issue and stateless Kurds. This topic is deliberately left vague to encourage creative resolutions in rich background of both history and circumstance.*

## **Introduction**

As the conflict against "ISIS/Daesh" eventually draws to a close, the future dawns on the broken relics, rubbles and ruins of Syria and the Levant. The brief power vacuum it leaves behind will be a dangerous scene: all parties and a large amount of the population are armed both in weapons and ideology. Religious difference between the Shia and the Sunni, Syrian rebels' fight for freedom and the Kurdish struggle for a nation will likely remain a backdrop. If the core political issues causing instabilities are not dealt with the Middle East will very likely remain ripe for war. With these conditions there is no doubt the international community will be called upon to mediate the aftermath of this conflict.

However danger and risk often comes hand in hand with opportunity. As the various parties are tired and broken with war, it provides a golden opportunity for the international community to step in and make changes that would otherwise be very difficult or near impossible; radical change in the geopolitical scene.

## **Background Information**

### **Sykes-Picot Agreement**

In late 1915 during WW1, the delegates of Britain, France and later Tsarist Russia met in secret to discuss the sphere of influence that the country would get, in the case the Ottoman Empire would be defeated. This agreement was named after the British and French diplomats Mark Sykes and François Georges-Picot. Although the details were not enacted exactly, it is seen as the root cause of the conflicts today. This is because it has created arbitrary borders without consideration of local religious and political climates. The San Remo agreement, its post war successor based on the initial claims, made mandate states and borders much resembling their modern counterparts. As the colonial empires diminished and withdrew, they left behind these nations and cemented the geopolitical map of the Middle East.

When the borders were drawn the diplomats intended to divide the land on a sectarian basis with each religious group having their own region. However this did not translate into practice and their straight line borders did not help. This underlying issue was then buried for many years under firstly nationalism and then authoritarian regimes. Now under relatively ineffective republics suffering from war, the rise of anti-secular movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood probably only amplifies the issue of religious and ethnic movements. In fact, a stated goal of ISIS/Daesh is to remove the effect of this agreement.

### **Kurdish Population**

There exists a significant Kurdish community in Iran, Syria, Iraq and Turkey. In these countries they enjoy varied levels of autonomy. There is a movement for Kurdish nationalism. In Syria,

during the civil war, the government abandoned many of the Kurdish regions, allowing for high level of autonomy by a Kurdish government. Syria's Kurdistan, named Rojava, has pursued grassroots socialist policies including women's emancipation and ethnic quotas. Iraqi Kurdistan has been an autonomous region for over a decade. Here, the government is more established and centralised but is also known for nepotism and corruption. There has been a non-binding referendum on independence for Iraqi Kurdistan, with an initial result of 93% for, which triggered condemnation from neighbouring countries and forced President Barzani to resign. In Turkey, the state with the greatest Kurdish population, the notion of Kurdish nationalism has long been suppressed and equated with violent rebels, because the state has pursued centralised and repressive policies. Many Kurds have migrated to Istanbul for a better quality of life.

### **Sunni-Shiite Relationship**

One noticeable issue in Syria and Iraq is the misalignment of religion between the elites and common classes. In pre-2003 Iraq, the ruling elites were the Sunni minority while the country had a Shia majority. The opposite is true in Syria where the elites are the Shia minority while the country is Sunni majority. The distribution of Shia is awkwardly split between Syria and Iraq, with the respective Shia regions nowhere near each other. The border region between Syria and Iraq is highly Sunni and has been an area of support for ISIS/Daesh. The Kurds are Sunni, but other nearby minorities follow their own religious policies, including the Yazidis and Druze, further complicating the situation.

Under the past "strongman" regimes the majority sects in the respective countries felt oppressed by the minority sects and have worsened relationship between the Sunni and Shiite sects. In fact, in Iraq since the fall of the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime the Shia groups now in power caused much tension and resulted in an insurgency between Sunni and Shia militias. The fact that the Iraqi army is relying on Shia militias to reclaim Sunni areas of northern and western Iraq from ISIS/Daesh is controversial.

Furthermore highly religious states like the majority Sunni Saudi Arabia and majority Shia Iran have been waging a proxy war against each other, where states would fund opposing sides following the same sect of Islam.

### **Some Suggestions**

#### **Formation of a Kurdish State**

Major Stakeholders: Syria, Iraq, Turkey

Minor Stakeholders: Russia Iran, Saudi Arabia

A viable consideration for the council is the formation of a Kurdish State. The Kurdish people are the largest ethnic group without a nation state. In the recent conflict, the Kurds have proven a valuable ally but also been highly militarised, therefore a unilateral declaration of independence or prolonged insurgency could be highly destabilising. The formation a single Kurdish state encompassing majority Kurd areas would require not only Syria and Iraq to cede a large area of territory, but also fuel separatism in Turkey. Also, there would doubtless be significant power plays between the various factions including Rojava and the oligarchic families from different tribes of Iraqi Kurdistan.

### **Redrawing of Syria-Iraqi Border**

Major Stakeholders: Syria, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia

Minor Stakeholders: International Community

A new border could potentially better protect the people from secular violence by creating a more homogenous state. However, it would be a complicated maneuver. Furthermore, the reactions from creating a new state could be chaotic and lead to mass migrations across the borders, and would it further fuel the proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran as the new Syria and Iraq each take a side?

### **Creation of autonomous regions within existing nations**

Major Stakeholders: Syria, Iraq,

Minor Stakeholders: International Community

Another possible consideration could be to create autonomous regions within the existing borders; this would be one of the less complicated manoeuvres, with potentially good results. However are these really able to protect the minority sects given the highly armed populace and also the power lying in the majority sect?

### **More information**

#### **On Sykes-Picot Agreement:**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-25299553>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sykes%E2%80%93Picot\\_Agreement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sykes%E2%80%93Picot_Agreement)

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Sykes-Picot-Agreement>

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/how-the-curse-of-sykes-picot-still-haunts-the-middle-east>

#### **On Kurds:**

<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/10/us-kurdish-independence/543540/>

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/06/15/masoud-barzani-why-its-time-for-kurdish-independence/>

<https://www.cfr.org/blog/unraveling-oil-geopolitics-intertwined-kurdish-independence-referendum>

<https://www.economist.com/news/international/21644167-iraqs-kurds-are-independent-all-name-they-must-play-their-cards-cleverly-if-they>

#### **On Sunni Shiite Relationship:**

<https://www.newstatesman.com/world/middle-east/2017/08/sunni-vs-shia-roots-islam-s-civil-war>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/04/sunni-shia-sectarianism-middle-east-islam>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sectarian\\_violence\\_among\\_Muslims](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sectarian_violence_among_Muslims)



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shia%E2%80%93Sunni\\_relations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shia%E2%80%93Sunni_relations)

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## 1985DISEC

Delegates are asked to consider the following issues as if the date was 12-14 January 1985. Delegates should represent their nations as they were during this time.

### 1985: A Brief Intro

The 1985 DISEC committee will be exploring the history, politics, and issues of 1985, four decades on from the end of the Second World War. Though the USSR, the UK, and the US were all allies during the Second World War, this alliance quickly became uneasy after the defeat of Germany, which left behind a power vacuum in central Europe. With most of Europe struggling after the long and gruelling war, which had a high cost on both economies and workforces, the USA and the USSR quickly emerged as the only two superpowers of the new world order.

With their ideological differences (liberty, the free market and private property vs equality, central planning and collective/state ownership), combined with the ready supply of countries waiting to be remodelled in their likenesses, the USA and the USSR quickly found themselves in fierce conflict for power and influence, with both seeking to take a much more active role in the European sphere. This conflict - the Cold War - was very different from the world conflicts that had marked the early half of the century: instead, it was a war of propaganda, of influence, of soft power. As the USSR expanded into Europe, forming the Eastern Bloc of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania, and Albania (aligned until 1960), Western fears of Soviet dominance increased, and the US and the USSR entered into an arms race, vastly accelerating their nuclear stockpiles.

The Cold War triggered a number of crises, which many historians believe came close to triggering actual war between the West and the East, such as the Suez Crisis (1956) and the Berlin Crisis (1961), though by far the most significant took place in 1962 - the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Just as the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the gradual breakdown of relations between China and the USSR, had an impact on Soviet power, America's humiliating defeat in Vietnam checked growing US power and influence. Despite this, the period leading up to 1985 saw increasing prosperity for both the USA and much of Europe, whose economies, bolstered by the Marshall Plan (a multi-billion dollar aid package given to Europe's ailing economies), had begun to recover, with France, West Germany, Scandinavia, and much of Western Europe growing at a significant rate. Though the USA and the UK suffered from economic stagnation and high-inflation rates through much of the 1970s, their economies too had begun to grow at much higher rates, further increasing the US's power.

In the 1970s, the US began to woo China in an attempt to limit the USSR strategically. Meanwhile, negotiations between the super-powers, such as the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, in which many countries participated, attempted to bring stability to the world order by limiting the number of warheads each country could possess - but these negotiations came to an end, after

Soviet troops entered Afghanistan in 1979. Tensions grew in the early 1980s after the USSR shot down Korean Air Lines Flight 007, a passenger plane that had entered Soviet airspace, and NATO held military exercises, code-named 'Able Archer', that the USSR believed were camouflage for a real attack. Throughout this period, the US began to increase pressures on the USSR through the 'Reagan Doctrine', which sought to counter Soviet influence by strengthening alliances with countries resisting the USSR and through trade restrictions with countries that were Soviet allies.

**And so here we are, it's the 12th January, 1985, the second treaty drafted in the Second Strategic Arms Limitation Talk is soon to expire and the Soviet-Afghan War is waging on, how will your history play out?**

### Topic 1:

#### The Question of Nuclear Disarmament

*1985DISEC aims to establish whether and how nuclear disarmament is achievable, and whether it is an effective way of reducing the chances and consequences of nuclear war.*

#### **Background**

While nuclear disarmament has always been one of the major issues for the UN, in 1985 nuclear stockpiles are at their highest level yet, and the UN has so far been ineffective in advocating for disarmament. Six countries are known to possess functioning nuclear weapons: The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, The United States of America, The United Kingdom, France, China, and Israel. It is unknown how many such weapons India or South Africa possess, but they have both carried out initial tests of weapons, and Pakistan and The Democratic People's Republic of Korea have similar aspirations. A list of countries' known nuclear arsenals, as estimated by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists<sup>1</sup>, is below:

Country	Size
The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	39,197
The United States of America	23,368
The United Kingdom	422
France	360
China	243
Israel	42

At this point, a number of treaties have been signed to try to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and associated technologies. The most prolific of these is the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of

Nuclear Weapons, which was signed in 1968, and initially ratified by over 40 states. The first pillar of the treaty is that only five nuclear weapons states (those who had manufactured and detonated a nuclear explosive device prior to 1 January 1967, i.e. the members of the P5; the USA, USSR, UK, France and China) are authorised to possess nuclear weapons, and all other states pledge not to manufacture their own weapons. The second pillar is a pledge for good-will negotiations with the goal of eventual total disarmament. Based on the swelling of nuclear arsenals since then, this seems to have been ineffective. Moreover, influential nations not to have signed the Treaty on Non-Proliferation include France, China, Israel, India, Pakistan, DPRK, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, Brazil and Argentina.

The other regional treaty to have been signed is The Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, with a similar South Asian treaty due for signing later in 1985. The 1959 Antarctic Treaty, the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, and the 1971 Seabed Arms Control Treaty all keep these various areas weapon-free.

### **Who are the stakeholders?**

It is most probably in states' interests to hold on to their nuclear weapons in order to gain leverage on the international stage, and to develop their own weapons if desired. States who are aligned to either the United States or the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic will want to support their ally's cause. It may be in the interest of those who do not support one particular side to lobby the most aggressively for disarmament, as this would help to equalise the geopolitical landscape and so be beneficial to these other states.

### **Issues for consideration when writing a resolution.**

How can disarmament be encouraged? Perhaps this might be achieved by getting more states to sign up to the NPT. Reductions by the United States or the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic would most likely have to be in parity to appease both sides.

What, if anything, should be done to limit the nuclear capabilities of non-nuclear weapon states as defined by the NPT, especially since more are developing weapons? As a threat to collective security, must they be punished in an effort to bring them in line?

How will the logistics of the actual disarmament process take place, and who will oversee this? Should the responsibility lie with individual states themselves to disarm, or should this be done by the UN?

How do these ideas fit in with the foreign policies of the time? Does disarmament place President Reagan's prized Strategic Defense Initiative under threat?

What role does the United Nations have in the disarmament process? Do new committees, agencies, or other bodies need to be formed, or new treaties be signed?

### **Resources**

Bulletin of Atomic Scientists - Global nuclear weapons inventories, 1945-2010:

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.2968/O66004008>

## Topic 2:

### The Question of Military Involvement in Afghanistan

*1985 DISEC asks delegates to investigate solutions to the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan.*

#### **Background**

Soviet troops have been present in Afghanistan since 1979, supporting a plea for military aid from the socialist national government. This national government seized power in a coup in 1978 and its popularity is mixed. Pushes for social equity have been supported in urban areas, but the programme of land reform and dispensing with the Islamic legal system has been met with universal disdain in the countryside, causing revolt.

Specifically, Soviet troops, cooperating with the government military police or 'Sarandoy', are waging a war against the mujahideen; Islamic religious rebels. The Soviets and government have control of the major population centres, but the mujahideen have adopted guerilla tactics which prevent the Soviets from permanently occupying rural territory. The mujahideen are incrementally being armed and supplied by the US and Pakistan in an attempt to disrupt Afghanistan's socialist government. The disruption has succeeded and made the Afghan government very reliant on the Soviets for food and supplies. However, the mujahideen lack a recognised leader and consist of many disparate and sometimes competing factions.

The Soviets have adopted a scorched-earth tactic deliberately targeting civilians using bombing tactics in an effort to reduce popular support for the mujahideen. The Afghan population has fallen by more than 10% since the start of the war, signifying a growing humanitarian and refugee crisis. Civilian casualties are unknown but are assumed to be increasing exponentially, and may have already risen over 100,000 per year.

A Security Council resolution drafted in 1980 condemning Soviet military intervention was, unsurprisingly, vetoed by the USSR. However, a less strongly worded General Assembly resolution was passed in the same year, and ever since then, the UN has been heavily involved in Afghanistan. In May of 1984, the Commission on Human Rights appointed a Special Rapporteur on Human Rights to consider the human rights situation in Afghanistan. In August, less than six months ago, the UN arranged talks between the Afghan and Pakistani heads of government. Little was achieved in this forum, but further talks have been scheduled.

#### **Who are the stakeholders?**

The war in Afghanistan is widely viewed as a proxy war between the USA and allies and the USSR and allies. This relates to the geopolitical philosophy of containment - that threats to the political system need to be fenced in to prevent damaging ideology from spreading.

Containment is in the minds of Soviets during the Afghan War, as they fear that Islamist ideologies, especially after the Iranian Revolution, would spread to Muslim parts of the USSR. Containment is also used by the USA to justify funding and arming the mujahideen to stop Communism from spreading into South Asia and to support the interests of US ally Pakistan.

Iran takes part in occasional skirmishes with Soviet units near the border and ideologically supports the mujahideen but is preoccupied with other matters, especially the Iran-Iraq War. Iran and Pakistan have also had to deal with the consequences of the war in the form of over a million refugees.

China and the Soviet Union have been willing to support each other in times of military pressure, as seen in Vietnam. But China has suffered an ideological split with the Soviet Union for over twenty years and China considers the war in Afghanistan as an intervention in China's independent political sphere. As such, China has begun to train mujahideen on its own soil, whilst openly seeking a formal resolution to the conflict.

### **Questions to consider**

What is in the interests of the Afghan population?

How would the international community go about achieving peace?

What would the Afghan government look like without Soviet backing?

Should Afghanistan persist as an independent and sovereign nation?

Is the geopolitical strategy of containment valid?

Can it be said that the USA, China, Iran and Pakistan are combatants in the war?

### **Resources**

1980 General Assembly Resolution on Afghanistan

<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Afgh%20ARESES6%202.pdf>

A documentary on the Soviet-Afghan War - watch up until 7:10

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-dQHBHRebSO>

An exceptionally detailed Wikipedia article

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet%E2%80%93Afghan\\_War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet%E2%80%93Afghan_War)

Relations between China and the USSR regarding Afghanistan

[http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/ziliao\\_665539/3602\\_665543/3604\\_665547/t18018.shtml](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/ziliao_665539/3602_665543/3604_665547/t18018.shtml)

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# SPECPOL

## Topic 1:

### The Question of the Remit of Future UN Peacekeeping Missions

*Each UN peacekeeping mission is given a distinct individual mandate by the Security Council. SPECPOL aims to question the roles and responsibilities of UN peacekeepers in general.*

## Background

### What is a peacekeeping mission?

The UN intervenes in military conflicts on the basis of undoing acts of military aggression, preserving territorial integrity, and mitigating genocide, civilian casualties, sexual violence, violence against children, the denial of humanitarian assistance or the forced displacement of people. A UN peacekeeping mandate is provided by the Security Council on a case-by-case basis. UN peacekeeping missions fall into four categories.

- **Observer missions** attempt to collect impartial data without influencing the conflict directly. They solely comprise unarmed monitors. They require the consent of all relevant parties. They are often accompanied by diplomatic **peacemaking** efforts.
- **Traditional peacekeeping** missions are armed and more substantial in size, but are generally not authorised to use force except in self-defence. They require the consent of the relevant parties. Multilateral destruction of weapons and demobilisation is often a feature.
- **Multidimensional peacekeeping**, unlike the other options, incorporates training, institution building, economic aid (see the development aid topic) or political oversight, particularly in elections. This also requires the consent of the relevant parties. It is often known as **peacebuilding**.
- **Peace enforcement** missions are heavily armed and large military operations that do not require the consent of the relevant parties, and whose mandate may identify an enemy and seek to neutralise it. These operations are approved by the Security Council only.

Often, a UN peacekeeping mission will involve more than one of these methods, or shift from one to another.

### Who are the stakeholders?

UN peacekeepers are currently deployed in 15 countries, including small operations in 3 countries present at SPSMUN; India, Pakistan and Israel. Delegates should also note that Mozambique, Ethiopia and Cote d'Ivoire have recently hosted major peacekeeping forces.

Contributions towards UN peacekeeping forces vary wildly by country. Within SPSMUN, the largest contributions come from Ethiopia, India, Pakistan, China, South Africa, Brazil, Italy and France. Delegates may wish to consider how the world community should fund peacekeeping in future.

## Questions

**The following questions should be very useful to anyone looking for a basis for a resolution**

Rigorous quantitative analyses have demonstrated that the net effect of UN peacekeeping missions on the duration of peace is positive. Is this sufficient to label them successes overall? Can they be expected to help in every type of conflict, including interstate war?

Are UN peacekeeping missions a fundamental violation of national sovereignty principles enshrined in the UN, or required to protect human rights? How much local consent and involvement is needed? Is it preferable for the decision makers to be totally impartial and unconnected, or personally invested in the success of the mission?

Are certain types of peacekeeping more favourable than others? More assertive military mandates tend to have a greater long-term impact, but these are more costly and it may be more of a challenge to involve local stakeholders in these situations. UN peace enforcement missions have been associated with civilian casualties, particularly in Haiti.

Some traditional peacekeeping missions have escalated into 'robust peacekeeping', which uses the same aggressive force as peace enforcement but at a more local, tactical scale, often against gangs or informal outlaw groups such as in Haiti. This essentially involves acting as a heavily militarised police force with the backing of the local government. Is this within the remit of traditional peacekeeping missions?

To what extent is it helpful for UN personnel to carry out democratic elections? They do not always manage to alter the actual power dynamic. Outcomes of these elections have so far been mixed, ranging from the creation of a dysfunctional coalition in Cambodia, prompting a coup, to the establishment of a stable government in Cote d'Ivoire.

Is complete demobilisation ever a realistic goal? How much peace can be achieved without resorting to force?

Are current training and accountability practices sufficient? UN peacekeepers have been linked to many cases of sexual violence, and to epidemics of diseases including HIV and cholera. The maximum punishment that can be imposed on peacekeepers is repatriation.

**All of the above questions could contribute to developing a set of rules and guidelines for all future UN peacekeeping missions. Currently, mandates are constructed on a case-by-case basis.**

### **Further Reading**

Overall data analysis of peacekeeping  
<http://www.columbia.edu/~vpf4/pkISQ%20offprint.PDF>

Cambodia  
<https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:140573/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

Cote d'Ivoire



<https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Cote-d'Ivoire-Event-Note-EN.pdf>

Ethiopia

<https://unmee.unmissions.org/>

Mozambique

<https://prezi.com/rbh8hpvjens/unomoz/>

Engaging documentary showing UN peace enforcement mistakes in Haiti

<https://itstayswithyou.com/so-far/>

## Topic 2:

### The Question of the Rights of Climate Refugees

*Despite the fact that an estimated 22.8 million people have been displaced by climate or weather related events since 2008, many of these people do not meet the definition for refugees. Given that this number is predicted to increase due to climate change, what can the UN do to protect the rights of climate refugees and reduce the future impact of climate on vulnerable communities?*

#### **Statistics & legal cases:**

An estimated 10% of the world's population live in areas less than 10 metres above sea level.

The following legal cases highlight the lack of consistency with which climate refugees are protected:

"In 2014, the New Zealand Immigration and Protection Tribunal **granted legal status to Siego Alesana and his family**. Originally from the small island nation of Tuvalu, which is only two meters above sea level and slowly receding into the ocean, the family made legal claims of being refugees, protected people, and claimed exceptional humanitarian grounds - all due to climate change. After years in court, the tribunal finally granted their stay on the third claim, **specifically noting the harm climate change could have** on their young children if returned to Tuvalu.

But this does not mean that New Zealand is open to environmental migrants. The following year the New Zealand high court **ruled against Iaone Teitiota** and his family, originally from the small island nation of Kiribati. Like Tuvalu, Kiribati is slowly disappearing into the Pacific. So dire is the situation in Kiribati that **plans for mass migration of the entire population** have been floated, with the country's leaders seeing this as an inevitability if the people are to survive."

#### **Things to consider:**

- Lack of an internationally accepted definition for climate refugees. Current definitions of refugee require proof of 'persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.
- Push vs Pull definitions of migration:

i) 'Push' migrants are forced from where they live, generally by violence, persecution or other factors which they have no control over. These are considered refugees and they are generally given legal protections under international law.

ii) 'Pull' migrants move due to better opportunities elsewhere: their motivation for moving becomes the key determinant of how they are treated legally. These are usually economic migrants, and are less protected than refugees as they have some control over their choices.

This becomes tricky when considering climate refugees: at what point between these two types do climate refugees come?

For example, people displaced by flash floods or rising sea levels seem to fit the definition of push migrants, but those who move due to desertification and lower crop yields look more like pull migrants. How can the UN assign legal rights in a consistent way?

- What duties do national governments have to relocate, rehome and otherwise support displaced citizens? Is there an obligation to ensure refugees' right to return is supported?
- Reasons for climate based migration:
  - i) Loss of housing (flooding, mudslides, earthquakes etc.)
  - ii) Loss of living resources (water, energy and food supply or employment affected)
- Loss of social and cultural resources ( Loss of cultural properties, neighbourhood or community networks due to climate change eg floods)

### **Who are the stakeholders?**

There are many parts of the world which could be affected, including areas prone to heavy flooding, desertification, rising sea levels, drought, land erosion, earthquakes etc. Geographically, this includes many low lying islands such as the Maldives (absent from SPSMUN) and countries such as China and Vietnam, as well as those affected by desertification and lack of water resources eg. Iraq, Kazakhstan, Pakistan and Ethiopia.

### **Measures to consider**

- i) UN publishes a definition of climate refugees as well as guidelines for national governments on how to handle climate refugees, domestically or from abroad.
- ii) Recommend preventative measures eg. Flood barriers, earthquake proof construction methods or more efficient drought proof farming methods.

Sources:

[http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/events/other/other/documents/250416\\_COLUMBIA\\_UNI\\_Susana\\_Adamo.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/events/other/other/documents/250416_COLUMBIA_UNI_Susana_Adamo.pdf)

<https://www.undispatch.com/climate-refugees-explained/>

### **Topic 3:**

### **The Question of the Role of International Governmental Development Aid**

Definition:

***Development aid targets ongoing structural issues, particularly systemic poverty, which can hinder economic, institutional and social development. It assists in building capacity to ensure resilient communities and sustainable livelihoods.***

Differences between development and humanitarian aid:

Development Aid	Humanitarian aid
Long term	Short term
Delivered in developing countries	Delivered in disaster zones
Responds to systemic problems	Responds to an incident or event
Focused on economic, social and political development.	Focused on saving lives.

Both humanitarian and development aid are related, and different forms of aid often have both humanitarian and development components.

Development aid can exist without humanitarian aid (in developing countries that do not have humanitarian crises), but it also often exists in addition to humanitarian aid during and after crises. For example, if an earthquake strikes a country, short-term humanitarian aid is needed. This includes the delivery of food and water, the provision of temporary shelter, as well as health services. In the long term, development aid may be given if the country is underdeveloped, enabling it to rebuild itself as well as making progress after that.

The trend for humanitarian aid to morph into development aid leads to the argument that development aid creates an atmosphere of dependence where by the recipient becomes reliant on the aid in the long term. Therefore a point of research would be the measures needed to prevent this from happening.

Background:

Development aid is spent primarily by the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) which was founded in 1965. UNDP is funded entirely by voluntary contributions from member nations meaning that its budget can vary from year to year. The organisation works with local governments to meet development challenges both economically and socially. The idea of sustainable development (with regards to the environment) has increasingly taken a more important role and many of its new initiatives are centred around this effort.

UNDP Budget:

## DESA:

This is another important part of the development aid organization. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat coordinates the global policies in the economic, social and environmental spheres and national action. The Department works in three main areas: (i) it compiles, generates and analyses a wide range of economic, social and environmental data and information on which States Members of the United Nations use for their policy directives; (ii) it facilitates the negotiations of Member States in many intergovernmental bodies on joint course of action to address ongoing or emerging global challenges; and (iii) it advises interested Governments on the ways and means of translating policy frameworks developed in United Nations conferences and summits into programmes at the country level and, through technical assistance, helps build national capacities.

## Resolutions:

In 1970, the General Assembly passed a resolution whereby countries would commit to spending 0.7% of their Gross National Income on overseas development aid. This meant that individual countries had greater freedom as to where their money was spent and invested, but it was still a UN initiative. Two problems occurred with this devolving of spending responsibilities. The first was that not all countries allocated enough of their budget. In 2016 only six countries (Denmark, UK, Norway, Luxembourg, Sweden and the Netherlands) spent 0.7% or more of their GNI. The second issue which arose was the accusations that aid was used for political reasons i.e. used as a leverage with other countries or as a condition of trade agreements. The criticisms of misguided political use has led to calls that the 0.7% should go directly to the UN to be used for "neutral development" programmes.

## Examples:

Overall development agenda for the UN:

[http://www.un.org/esa/devagenda/UNDA\\_BW5\\_Final.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/devagenda/UNDA_BW5_Final.pdf)

Interactive summary of projects: <http://open.undp.org/#2017>

India: <http://www.in.undp.org/content/india/en/home/operations/projects/overview.html>

Africa: <http://www.africa.undp.org/content/rba/en/home.html>

Asia and the Pacific: <http://www.asia-pacific.undp.org/>

Latin America: <http://www.latinamerica.undp.org/content/rblac/en/home.html>

South Sudan: <http://open.undp.org/#project/00077970> --- this one is more specific.

## Other questions to explore:

- Which nations should give and receive international development aid, and how much?
- Should we take Human Rights Records into account?
- Does a limit need to be placed on the length of time a country can receive money for a particular project?
- Should it come in the form of grants, loans, goods, or ties to specific projects?

- Can aid be politically misused?
- Is aid dependency a problem?
- Can aid pre-emptively stem the flow of refugees?

Sources :

[http://www.un.org/esa/devagenda/UNDA\\_BW5\\_Final.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/devagenda/UNDA_BW5_Final.pdf)

<http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home.html>

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/jan/04/uk-among-six-countries-hit-un-aid-spending-target-oecd>

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# SOCHUM

Topic 1:

- The Question of the Persecution of Religious Minorities around the World

*Article 2 of the UN charter outlines that no humans shall be deprived of any of the rights owed to them under the UN declaration of human rights, written in response to the Holocaust, perhaps the largest organised assault on a religious minority in known history. Despite this, religious minorities continue to suffer abuse and persecution in various parts of the world. SPECPOL seeks to explore the strategies that might address this issue and ameliorate the causes of religious tensions and conflicts.*

## Defining the Question

What is a religious minority?

In short, there is no widely accepted definition, which may well contribute to the problem. However, emphasis is most often placed on the nominal sharing of a religion, self-identification as a member of a minority group.

Francesco Capotorti in his capacity as Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, defined a minority as 'A group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members - being nationals of the State - possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language'.

For the uses of this question, the relevant aspects would be:

- Numerical inferiority - the group must be smaller in size than the other groups that make up the population of a nation, though how much smaller remains ambiguous under this definition
- In a non-dominant position - the group in question does not wield power and influence, in business, politics, and other aspects of civil society in excess of any and all other groups
- Have religious aspects distinct to the rest of a society - perhaps the defining characteristic, this is what constitutes a minority as specifically a religious minority
- Show a sense of solidarity aimed at preserving their religion - this definition requires that the members of the community, even tacitly, can be found willing to maintain their religious belief, a part of the definition that some may find questionable

What is persecution?

As with so many of the phrases we regularly use, persecution has no objective nor universal definition, however, the 1951 Convention defines a 'threat to life or freedom on account of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership of a particular social group' as being entirely sufficient for an action to constitute persecution, though other serious violations of human rights may well also constitute persecution, however beyond this point it becomes more

circumstantial, as whilst one action may not amount to persecution, even if taken on account of religion in this case, a series of actions could constitute persecution when viewed holistically.

We might also require that for it to constitute persecution of a religious minority, it requires action to be taken systematically and indiscriminately against members of the entire group, rather than a number of individuals.

### **Background:**

It is tricky to think of persecution of religious minorities without immediately recalling to mind the actions taken against the Jewish population of Nazi Germany. The persecution arguably began with the restriction on the civil liberties and the legal protections of the Jewish population, with the Nuremberg Race Laws of 1935 introducing various restrictions on the Jewish population, such as forbidding a Jew from marrying or having sexual relationships with a German citizen or even an individual with German blood, from this point it accelerated to the sacking of German shops by party aligned militias in 1938, to the infamous Final Solution of 1941, under which Jews were systematically killed in a manner of brutal and truly inhumane ways.

More currently, we might look at the plight of the Baha'is in Iran. The Baha'is are the largest religious minority in Iran and follow the Baha'i faith, which is viewed as heretical or apostate from the Islamic faith, meaning that they have abandoned Islam, largely over their belief that the teachings of Muhammad have been superseded by the prophet Bahá'u'lláh. The UN, Amnesty International, the EU, and the US have all declared that members of this community have suffered numerous unjustified arrests, incarceration, torture, beating, and even executions, as well as being deprived of property right, systematic denial of employment, of access to higher education. It is clear that this constitutes even the most lenient definition of persecution.

In the states controlled by ISIS, religious persecution is blatant, being one of the group's expressed goals. ISIS subscribes chiefly to a highly restrictive branch of Salafism that views the other branches of Islam and for that matter nearly all other forms of religious expression and indeed lack thereof, as departures from the will of Allah to be punishable by death, which manifests in highly zealous and brutal persecution of religious minorities found in their territories, even if those minorities held power or numerical superiority before the invasion of ISIS. Religious minorities within these regions can expect to be forced into servitude, taken hostage for ransom, or murdered brutally, with ISIS employing crucifixion and beheadings in public.

Of 196 nations surveyed between 2012 and 2014, 116 were found to infringe on religious freedom, with minorities experiencing persecution, discrimination, and violence, with countries suffering under the spread of the Islamic groups Boko Haram and ISIS.

All this is against a backdrop of the UN Declaration on Religious Minorities, which declares that all nation states have a duty to protect religious minorities, ensure that they may continue, and ensure that they enjoy the human rights outlined by the UN Declaration of Human Rights (1948) as enjoyed by any other group.

### **Who are the stakeholders?**

Saudi Arabia, Myanmar, China, DPRK, Iran, Iraq, India, Israel, the US, and Ethiopia will likely find themselves particularly interested.

#### Questions to Consider:

- What are the causes that lead up to religious persecution? Is it simply a result of clashing religious beliefs?
- What are the best ways to promote tolerance and break down religious tensions? Is education the quickest way?
- Can we allow religions to continue that promote the idea of heresy and demand punishment for diverting views?
- Is humanitarian intervention justifiable on the grounds of putting an end to religious persecution? If so, should this be conducted by UN peacekeepers or by other nations?
- Should the west be cautious of a gradual move towards religious persecution under the guise of promoting secularism? E.g. the 'Burkha ban' in France

#### Further Reading

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic\\_State\\_of\\_Iraq\\_and\\_the\\_Levant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_State_of_Iraq_and_the_Levant)  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Minorities/Pages/internationalallaw.aspx>  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-30001063>  
<http://www.unhcr.org/3d58e13b4.pdf>  
[http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Minorities/Booklet\\_Minorities\\_English.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Minorities/Booklet_Minorities_English.pdf)  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution>  
<https://dossiersgrihl.revues.org/3896>

#### Topic 2:

- **The Question of the Limitations of Worldwide Free Speech**

***SOCHUM will debate to what extent the right to free speech is universal. Governments must consider the competing interests of personal liberties and the rights and wellbeing of those potentially on the receiving end.***

#### Background

With the rise of the internet, ideas now spread and disseminate more easily than ever before. The last few years have seen a rise in ideological conflict between those that believe that unpopular, challenging and offensive views should be aired and potentially refuted in open debate, and those that believe they are too dangerous to be available. Laws preventing 'hate speech' vary hugely between countries in their severity, because hate speech is so difficult to define.

Meanwhile, in areas with an objective truth, the concept of 'fake news', containing objectively incorrect facts, has resulted from an unregulated news environment.



An individual who labels offensive views as dangerous is often labelled politically correct. A person who is politically correct is someone who believes that language and actions that could be offensive to others, especially those relating to sex and race, should be avoided.

This term was first used in the 80s and became popular in the 1990s, and is often used to typify liberal ideologies that attempt to make society a more palatable for minority groups who may be more offended by words rooted in derogatory and discriminatory terms.

Delegates should keep in mind that freedom of speech is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as follows; "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." However, The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) states that "any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law".

### **Who are the stakeholders?**

The most permissive nations are, almost without exception, wealthy nations. At SPSMUN this includes Canada, Sweden, the United States and the United Kingdom, although among these the trend is still downwards. The least permissive nations at SPSMUN are North Korea, Equatorial Guinea, Kazakhstan, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Cuba, Russia and Vietnam.

Several countries could take further instructions from their constitutions and domestic legislation. Some lean against free speech. In Brazil, according to the 1988 Constitution, racism is an "Offense with no statute of limitations and no right to bail for the defendant". On June 30, 2017, Germany approved a bill criminalizing hate speech on social media sites. Among criminalizing hate speech, the law states that social networking sites may be fined up to 50 million euros (\$56 million) if they persistently fail to remove illegal content within a week, including defamatory "fake news." Others lean towards it, such as the United States, which has strong constitutional and public tendencies towards free speech. Surveys suggest that public support for free speech is higher in the US than in any other country.

The perspective of less developed countries is particular. National stability comes at a premium, and, especially after the Arab Spring, many countries have been willing to increasingly sacrifice freedom of expression because it is seen as a risk to national integrity and sovereignty. Rwanda, although not at SPSMUN, is an ideal example.

### **Questions**

**The following questions should be very useful to anyone looking for a basis for a resolution**

To what extent do regulations limiting free speech enable governments to control the spread of ideas? Is this desirable or helpful? Is freedom of speech the same as the right to information?

What exactly is meant by hate speech? What can be defined as an incitement to violence? What about blackmail? Or racism? Does free speech inherently threaten minorities and marginalised groups?

What role should foreign countries have in ensuring/preventing free speech? At what point would it be acceptable to intervene in preventing/ensuring free speech?

How do we combat fake news?

Is the content provider or platform (for example a social media site) responsible for any controversial content expressed on that platform? Should the principle of net neutrality be preserved?

Is the trend of 'no-platforming' in universities in the UK and USA morally justifiable?

Does the right to free speech equal a right to be heard in the national press?

Does political correctness need to be combatted?

### **Resources**

The meaning and extent of hate speech, with reference to UN guidance

<https://www.article19.org/pages/en/hate-speech-more.html>

Many platforms for speech that seem objective are in fact politicised

<https://www.indexonensorship.org/2017/11/six-times-facebook-violated-community-standards-removing-content/>

How debate on free speech needs to be distinguished from value-based judgements

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/feb/27/free-speech-debate-milo-yiannopoulos-alt-right-censorship>

Overview of political correctness

<https://qz.com/1055351/how-the-american-right-co-opted-the-idea-of-free-speech/>

### **Topic 3:**

- **The Question of Life Imprisonment and Solitary Confinement**

***SOCHUM aims to address the moral and humanitarian issues surrounding life imprisonment and solitary confinement.***

### **What is life imprisonment and solitary confinement?**

Life imprisonment (also known as life incarceration, or life sentence) is any sentence in which the convicted are to remain imprisoned for unlimited time, or until paroled. Solitary confinement is a sentence in which the inmate is isolated from any human contact (often with the exemption of prison staff), and sentences of this kind may last any time from days to years.

## Where and why are they used?

- Around the world crimes that can lead to life imprisonment include: murder, rape, child abuse, drug/human trafficking, burglary and piracy among many others. Where life imprisonment is a sentence, there are often systems in place to request parole after a set time (usually conditional on past and future conduct), although this depends very much on the particular jurisdiction in question.
- Along with this, some technically finite sentences are handed out that exceed the human maximum lifespan, moreover courts can also sometimes add on years to life imprisonment, to ensure the inmate never gets released. For example, courts in South Africa have handed out at least two sentences that have exceeded a century.
- Few countries allow minors to be served sentences that do not allow for eventual release, but these include Australia, Argentina, Sri Lanka and the United States.
- In a number of countries, life imprisonment has been effectively abolished. European countries that have done this include Serbia, Croatia and Spain (capping it at 40 years), and in South America 10 others have, including Brazil (maximum sentence is 30 years), Colombia and Bolivia.
- The worldwide practice of solitary confinement is usually employed on the basis of the inmate breaking prison rules, when seen as a threat to other inmates, or is used as an additional measure of protection for particularly vulnerable inmates - for example those with a high risk of self-harm.
- The practice of solitary confinement may have detrimental psychological effects on prisoners: these can include increased and severe anxiety, depression, weight loss, hallucinations, nightmares and difficulties with memory and concentration. Studies have shown the longer one stays in solitary confinement, the more one is prone to self-harm - one showing inmates assigned to self-harm were 3.2 times as likely to commit an act of self-harm per 1000 days as inmates who were not. Inmates also often have very limited access to healthcare to treat these issues, leaving their environment to further exacerbate their mental state.

## Involvement of the UN:

- The UN stance has become increasingly oppositional to the issue of solitary confinement over the past century or so.
- The UN Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted in 1949 states "no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment". This is reiterated in the legally binding International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), effective of 1976. Thus, if solitary confinement is believed to constitute any of these things, it must be a breach of international law.

- However, solitary confinement was not thought to constitute torture when either of these were adopted.
- In 1984 the Convention Against Torture (CAT) defined it as “any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person”.
- The UN so far has not imposed any resolution specifically against life imprisonment.

**Questions to consider:**

- Many call to uniform international law when it comes to life imprisonment. Should an international maximum prison sentence be imposed? If so, how long?
- The amount of proof needed to legitimise a constitutional change of law on solitary confinement is a huge hurdle to overcome for activists. Do the ruinous physiological and psychological effects of solitary confinement count as torture? Are they intentional? (Using the definition of torture given above).
- Alternatives to solitary confinement include administering medical treatment to those who display signs of mental illness (e.g. by transferring inmates to a separate facility), or promoting familial and social relations to boost morale to avert possible aggression. Are either of these feasible?
- If life imprisonment and solitary confinement were both abandoned, how would you differentiate the sentences served for extreme behaviour to the same effect?
- If it does not help but actually worsens an inmate's' mental situation, is there indeed any justification for solitary confinement at all? How about the safety of the prisoner and prison staff?

**Resources:**

<https://www.afsc.org/resource/solitary-confinement-facts>  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/what-does-solitary-confinement-do-to-your-mind/>  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/12/opinion/solitary-confinement-colorado-prison.html>  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2016/apr/27/you-start-seeing-figures-in-the-paint-chips-recollections-of-life-in-solitary-confinement>  
<https://io9.gizmodo.com/why-solitary-confinement-is-the-worst-kind-of-psycholog-1598543595>  
<http://www.apa.org/monitor/2012/05/solitary.aspx>

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# Legal

## Topic 1:

### The Question of Recognition of State Sovereignty

*Legal aims to examine and solve conflicts in international law, and how to deal with them when they occur. State sovereignty is a prime example of such international legal conflicts.*

## Background

### What is state sovereignty?

State sovereignty has no clear definition, however a widely accepted one, which delegates may choose to think about for practical purposes, establishes the following:

- Supremacy - trumps all other claims to sovereignty
- Authority and legitimacy - the commands of the sovereign, be it ruler or parliament, are obeyed and respected

### Things for delegates to consider when thinking about sovereignty:

- The exact territory included in claim to sovereignty
- Any other claimants to sovereignty of a region
- Whether the international recognition of a sovereign area should not necessarily be the same question as the actual sovereignty of the region itself
  - The UN may wish to send a signal with its recognition of sovereignty, or de-legitimise a particular claimant even if they fulfill the requirements for sovereignty
- Whether the principle of self-determination should overrule sovereignty claims, i.e. should a region be able to declare itself independent of a higher executive body on the grounds that its people want the region to secede and gain autonomous rule? If this is the case, should all regions have the ability to declare themselves independent despite the protestations of traditionally sovereign bodies?
- Whether independence referendums held by a region without the support of the wider nation can be considered legitimate and whether such a referendum should be considered binding and forceful.

**The following regions, and whether or not they should be recognised by the UN, could be useful to look at when considering topics for resolutions:**

#### Catalonia and Spain

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-20345073>
- <http://www.cataloniavotes.eu/en/background/timeline/>
- [http://www.elnacional.cat/en/politics/how-catalonia-can-obtain-international-recognition-according-to-foreign-affairs\\_199671\\_102.html](http://www.elnacional.cat/en/politics/how-catalonia-can-obtain-international-recognition-according-to-foreign-affairs_199671_102.html)

#### Kurdistan and Iran

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-29702440>

Crimea and Russia/Ukraine

- <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/11449122/Ukraine-crisis-timeline-of-major-events.html>

Resolutions are encouraged to be focused on claims to sovereignty, but also on the process of the UN granting sovereignty to states, or even a recommendation as to how states should decide matters concerning sovereignty through a systematic method.

## Topic 2:

### The Question of Military Intervention in Response to Global Terrorism

*The beginning of the 21st century has been unmistakably marked by the fight against radical terrorism across the world. However, in light of the Iraq war, in which the United States and United Kingdom went to war without obtaining official approval of the United Nations Security Council, Legal wants to reopen debate around what ability UN member states should be able to have to launch military intervention abroad, particularly with regards to rising terror threats such as ISIS/Daesh.*

## Background

### What is Military Intervention?

For the purpose of this debate a military intervention can be defined as the deliberate act of a nation or a group of nations to introduce its own military force into the conflict of another country in order to affect its outcome. Under current UN Provisions such a campaign must first be approved by the Security Council, but it does not require the consent of relevant parties in the concerned territory.

### Which countries are particularly affected?

Of those nations represented at SPSMUN:

- Countries such as Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan should note both their current state as particularly heavily-affected victims of global terror, and the turmoil many of them have faced in the recent past at the hands of military intervention by larger states.
- The countries of Myanmar, Israel, and the DPRK should also bear in mind the fact that they have faced a number of calls at present for UN peacekeeping or military intervention on the basis of certain internal or foreign affairs.
- The countries of UK, USA, Russia, Germany, France, Italy, and Poland should discuss resolution in light of their being particular victims of ISIS/Daesh terror attacks and the subject of ideological hatred by the group, and along with all other members of the Security Council they have the power to affect change in this regard. These nations, the UK and the USA in particular, should also bear in mind their past records on military intervention and be prepared to either defend it or admit fault should this topic arise.

## Questions

The following questions should be very useful to anyone looking for a basis for a resolution:

Under what conditions should it be acceptable to declare war?

Is it possible that such conflicts will resolve themselves without UN intervention? Would this be a more or less bloody method of resolving the conflict?

Can a military intervention be justified if it is overwhelmingly unwanted by the affected population of the territory which a terror group occupies or attacks?

Under what conditions is it right to declare that a leader should no longer be sovereign and therefore justify any attempt to overthrow him?

What can be done to prevent the increasing politics of fear in a domestic context in each country, and should countries be seen to be doing more to protect their people?

If, in the process of a military intervention, the leading parties of a sovereign state are deposed, what protocol should be undertaken to ensure that the region does not remain in instability?

Can steps be taken to prevent the prevalence of malpractice and extreme cruelty by soldiers engaged in military intervention, as has been problematic in a number of recent campaigns?

What steps should be taken to ensure that UN member states, and in particular members of the Security Council, do not bypass the protocol of war, and what should be done if a member state either deceives or disobeys the Security Council?

Can other steps be taken to reduce the spread of extreme ideologies, not only in developed economies but in the developing world?

## Further Reading:

The Chilcot Report [note volume 5 in particular]

<http://www.iraqinquiry.org.uk/the-report/>

<https://www.state.gov/s/seci/>

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm130829/debtext/130829-0001.htm>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-20991719>

Short four-part documentary on the Islamic State:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bsCZzpmbEcs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jzCAPJDAhQA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jOaBNbdUbcA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGQwT0sh--0>

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