



Background Guide Human Rights Council GWHMUN-2020

September 19-20

Letter from the chair

Dear Delegates,

My name is Rishi Shah and I am currently a 12th grader pursuing the IB at Greenwood High. I will be serving as your chairperson for the Human Right Council this year at GWHMUN. My passion in current affairs and history is what influenced me to take up MUN at a young age and through this committee I hope I can help you gain an interest in MUN. The HRC has always been a committee that intrigued me because it helped me understand how people across the world are suffering, and how I can do my part by trying to find solutions to their problems.

Apart from that, I am an aspiring engineer which might sound surprising to many of you. Unlike most MUNner's I was often the shy kid in class, even in my first committee. However, my interest in current affairs and history which I studied in high school allowed me to enjoy MUN and become a confident public speaker. This is why as your chairperson I want to help all of you, including people who are just trying out MUN for the first time. Leaving MUN aside, I am an avid football and F1 fan supporting the red teams Bayern Munich and Scuderia Ferrari respectively.

This year has showed us how fragile our world is and millions of families across the world are suffering due to numerous reasons, the COVID-19 pandemic only being one small reason. Our world faces a constant threat by oppressors who have cause mass atrocities in the past and continue to do so. It is your responsibility as the members of the Human Rights Council to find a solution to these problems that have been halting the progress of the human race for centuries. The agenda for our committee is persecution of religious minorities. This is an agenda that I feel is often overlooked upon and its impact on the entire world population has never been emphasized upon.

Our entire EB has put in a lot of work into this background guide so that everyone is able to understand the agenda. Special thanks to Pranav and Heesoo your EB members for spending a lot of time into this background guide. We really hope you read it carefully and are well prepared for committee. If you have any doubts or queries regarding anything from procedure to things outside committee, I will be more than happy to help you out. Until then, good luck! research well and I am looking forward to fruitful debate in committee.

Regards,

Rishi A Shah,

Chairperson of the HRC.

About the committee

The Human Rights Council's mandate is to promote "universal respect for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all" and "address situations of violations of human rights, including gross and systematic violations, and make recommendations thereon.

As the name suggests, the council is mandated to promote and protect the enjoyment and full realization, by all people, of all rights that are established in the Charter of the United Nations and in international human rights laws and treaties. The council is guided in its work by the mandate provided by the UNGA in resolution 48/141, the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent human rights instruments, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, and the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document.

The mandate includes preventing human rights violations, securing respect for all human rights, promoting international cooperation to protect human rights, coordinating related activities throughout the United Nations, and strengthening and streamlining the United Nations system in the field of human rights. In addition to its mandated responsibilities, the council leads efforts to integrate a human rights approach within all work carried out by United Nations agencies.

Overview to the agenda

Agenda: persecution of religious minorities

Most religious faiths are victims of persecution somewhere. In this supposedly enlightened, tolerant age, people routinely are tortured, jailed and killed for their faith or lack of faith in God. Authoritarian regimes which fear independent thought and allegiance to anyone or anything beyond the state tend to war against any public expression of faith. In this committee we expect all of you to work together and find a valid and viable solution.

Persecution of Rohingya Muslims (a case study)

The Rohingya Muslims are a stateless Indo-Aryan ethnic group who follow Islam and reside in mainly Rakhine State, Myanmar. They remain indigenous to western Myanmar. There were an estimated 1 million Rohingya living in Myanmar before the Rohingya genocide in 2017. The UN in 2013 described the Rohingya as one of the most persecuted minorities in the world. The pro-Buddhist government of Myanmar has systematically persecuted them, ever since Myanmar was an independent state. The million strong Rohingya cannot attain citizenship in Myanmar, and are not recognised as an official people as per the 1982 citizenship law. They are restricted from freedom of movement, state education and civil jobs. The Ro-

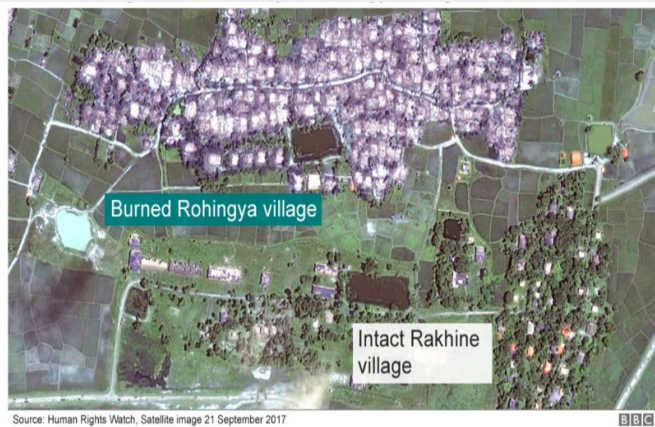
hingya are instead recognised as Muslim immigrants from the Bengali community. The conditions of the Rohingya have widely been compared to the apartheid. Myanmar has historically been ruled by authoritarian military juntas, and one of the key components of the ideology is to have a “common enemy” to unite the country. The majority Buddhists and the minority Rohingya have always been at different ends of the spectrum. When Myanmar was fighting for independence against the British, the Rohingya sided with the colonisers rather than the Japanese. Due to these historical tensions, the Rohingya occupied the role of the “common enemy”. Thus, began their systematic oppression. Various arms insurrections have taken place against them by the Myanmar law enforcement, justifying it by stating that they were illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. The deadliest of these attacks occurred in 2017-18. On 25th August 2017, the ARSA (Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, an insurgent group fighting for Rohingya self-determination), launched deadly attacks against police outposts, with knives and homemade bombs. The government, backed by Buddhist mobs launched a campaign of brutal genocide against them.

A genocide is defined as an intentional act to destroy a particular group of people, in whole or in part. The incident on 25th August provided the spark for the government to unleash one of the deadliest attacks on them. During the summer of 2017, the Myanmar military began arming and training Ra-

khine Buddhist natives in the state, and in late summer advised that any ethnic Rakhine’s “wishing to protect their state” would be given the opportunity to join “the local armed police.” In early September, the security forces began “clearance operations” against the Rohingya, and in the following month over 24000 people had been killed as a result of the violence, and over 11600 had been beaten. Refugees reported women and children being beaten, tortured and their villages and houses being burnt. The government, on the other hand, claimed that only 500 people died, most of whom were militants, and that the clearance operations had stopped in September. Satellite images contradicted these statements instead verifying the refugees’ claims that the violence continued. In a speech defending her actions, Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi stated that over 50% of the villages were still intact and the fires were lit by the Rohingya themselves. The UN Human Rights Chief at the time, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, had called on the military to “stop pretending” that Muslims are burning their own homes.

More than 500,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh and India since the genocide. Although many have since returned, the Myanmar army had resorted to extreme measures, such as placing landmines all over the border, to prevent them from returning. Aid agencies and the UN worked to provide food, water and shelter for the huge influx. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees was also involved. Bangladesh is already home to hundreds of

thousands of Rohingya refugees who have fled previous outbreaks of violence in Myanmar. But existing refugee camps are now full, so the new arrivals had to occupy any space they could find. Inside Myanmar, early on there were reports of Rakhine Buddhists moving south to escape the violence. Many eminent experts said that, in such a situation it was highly unlikely that the Rohingya could continue to live in peace with equal rights in Myanmar.



International response:

Many countries such as Indonesia, Israel, Canada, Bangladesh, France and the United States of America had condemned the events. Others, such as India and China had supported the government's actions and condemned the attacks by the ARSA. The UN has termed the genocide as a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing". Groups such as Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch have consistently decried the treatment of the Rohingya. The UN adopted a resolution to set up an independent international mission to investigate the alleged abuses. It

stopped short of calling for a Commission of Inquiry, the UN's highest level of investigation. The report concluded that Myanmar had consistently failed to follow International Human Rights laws. Among other ways to hold Myanmar accountable for its actions, On 11th November 2019, Gambia, with the support of 57 other nations from the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation, filed a lawsuit against Myanmar in the International Court of Justice. The lawsuit alleged that Myanmar committed genocide against the Muslim minority group and was filed in the World Court as a dispute between nations. More than 740,000 Rohingyas ultimately fled to Bangladesh, but the government insisted that the crackdown in Rakhine since 2017 was necessary to target terrorism. Aung San Suu Kyi personally led a legal team at the International Court of Justice to defend Myanmar in the first public hearings for this case on 10–12 December 2019, where she unequivocally rejected allegations of Genocide. In January 2020, the court ruled that to take emergency measures to prevent further atrocities.



Sudanese Civil War (Second) and unrest in South Sudan

There have been two prolonged civil wars in Sudan since independence in 1956. The first lasted from August 1955 to March 1972, and the second began in May 1983. Although both wars have been fought largely in the southern part of the country, their aims have diverged. The first aimed at independence, or at least autonomy for the south, whereas the second primarily aimed at restructuring the central political institutions and devolving power on marginalized areas.

The background for the wars lay in the tension between North and South Sudan, the former largely Arabic speaking and Muslim and the latter home to diverse African peoples who adhered to traditional religions or converted to Christianity. Southern peoples had resisted Turko-Egyptian and Mahdist slave raids in the nineteenth century; the British did not manage to subdue them until the 1920s. Britain then imposed the Closed Districts Act (1925) and other measures that banned north-

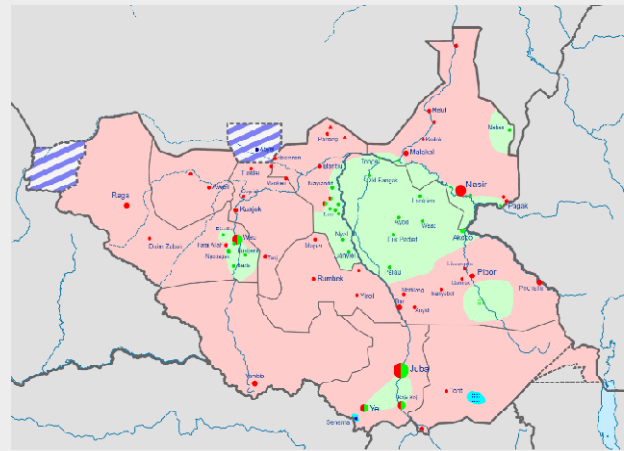
ern traders and Muslim preachers from the south and even banned Arab-style dress and the use of the Arabic language in government offices and schools. Britain failed to promote education and economic development in the south, leaving it far behind the north when the two parts were merged at independence under a centralized system that placed power in the hands of northerners. Many southerners felt that they had not gained independence but had, instead, exchanged one foreign ruler for another.

In the Second Sudanese Civil War, the UN had noted over 50,000+ counts of human rights violations and over 1.2 billion people who do not have access to proper supplies and daily necessities. And in the end a new nation, South Sudan was formed; the country itself is torn apart by warfare and also has a large number of people who can't access basic needs.

The Civil Wars have caused the newly formed South Sudanese Government to spiral into chaos, with the split of the government in 2013 (although there were multiple rebels in the country itself previously) when the Vice President, Riek Machar, and the President, Salva Kiir, split (mainly due to their religious and ethnic differences). Salva Kiir was a Dinka whereas Riek Machar was a Nuer; thus when Riek had left the government a sizeable portion of the military that was Nuer left with him and staged a revolt against the government of Salva Kiir, leading to the South Sudan Civil War that still wages on today. Both sides have committed multiple atrocities against other

religious and ethnic groups who oppose them and there is wide spread persecution of Muslim Arabs by both sides (this is called as ‘ethnic cleansing’ both). Minor religions or ethnicities such as Christianity or the Murle people are suppressed by both sides and have resorted to form rebel militias of their own further increasing the violence and turmoil in the country. The UN had tried intervening with the formation of UNMISS but currently the most effective forces are the armies of Uganda and Ethiopia that are backing the official Government of South Sudan headed by Salva Kiir in battling against the Nuer White Army and it’s militia allies (who have marginally lower war crime charges than both the South Sudanese government and the rebel forces). The fractured forces, that is the government of South Sudan, faces war crime charges such as massacring of unarmed civilians and killing and attacking of UN Peacekeeping forces. South Sudan is one of the 38 countries blacklisted where individuals are threatened and shunned for supporting or cooperating with the UN on human rights.

The HRC released a report of the Human Rights situation in February of 2019 (A/HRC/40/69) which was a re-evaluation of their resolution passed in 2016 which condemned the plain violations of human right violations and ethnic suppression in South Sudan (A/HRC/S-26/L.1). The Secretary General also released a report of the situation in South Sudan, S/2019/936 in 2019 which analysed the ‘ethnic cleansing’ taking place in the country.



Apartheid (Historical event)

Apartheid was a system of institutionalised racial segregation that existed in South Africa and South West Africa from 1948 until the early 1990s. Apartheid was characterised by an authoritarian political culture based on baasskap, which ensured that South Africa was dominated politically, socially, and economically by the nation's minority white population. According to this system of social stratification, white citizens had the highest status, followed in descending order by Asians, Coloureds, and black Africans. The economic legacy and social effects of apartheid continue to the present day. Broadly speaking, apartheid was delineated into petty apartheid, which entailed the segregation of public facilities and social events, and grand apartheid, which dictated housing and employment opportunities by race. Prior to the 1940s, some aspects of apartheid had already emerged in the form of minority rule by white South Africans and the socially enforced separation of black Africans from other races, which

later extended to pass laws and land apportionment.

Detention without trial for interrogation or 'preventive' purposes, barring access to the courts, lawyers, family or friends has been practised on a wide scale for 30 years. Over 75 000 victims have experienced the detention cells in that time, some for as long as 3 years. Over 50 000 of that number have been detained during the last 5 years, attesting to the extreme level of repression exercised during the State of Emergency. Today, detention without trial continues on a daily basis, it is happening as we speak. The numbers are in the hundreds rather than the thousands of the recent past and the current detainee population stands at between 400 and 500, including children under the age of 18. The long history of torture in detention has not ended as reports continue to come in. Banning and restriction of persons (house arrest in its extreme form) is, since F.W. de Klerk's address to parliament on 2 February 1990, something of the past. However, the powers under the legislation are still intact and could be invoked at any time.

Political trials and imprisonment are at a level, which can only be described, as frenzied. During 1989, a record number of 395 known political trials were completed involving over 3000 accused, with 42 death sentences and 237 prison sentences of between 5 and 20 years. The year 1990 started off with over 250 political trials under way and looks set to exceed last year's record. The current political prisoner population is estimated at around 3000, of whom about 12% are 'security law' prisoners and the

balances are 'unrest' prisoners convicted of such offences as public violence.

During this time all coloured people were treated inhumanely and were not offered the rights that everyone else had, a time where the bare minimum of rights was never given.



Israeli-Palestine War

The conflict arose due to a dispute of territory after The Great War (Balfour Declaration) as the Jews were promised a country of their own in an area that was predominantly Arabic (Palestine was conquered by the Brits during WWI against the Ottoman Empire). Soon armed conflict sprung up in the area after the France-Syrian War, and the British handed over the problem to the UN due the violence that ensued after the Second World War, and the UN adopted resolution 181(II) and voted to partition the area into 2 independent states (Arabic Republic of Palestine and the Zionist State of Israel) and one city-state (The City-State of

Jerusalem). This plan failed and fighting engulfed the area with several national movements, by both Arabs and Jews, rising through the cracks left by the British rule of the area. The Arab League backed the Arab struggle in Palestine and the UNSCOP was formed and tried and failed to maintain peace in the area (Charter VI and Charter VII (III): Recommendations were the end products). Conflict continued and disputes constantly arose over time and during the 1994 Oslo Accords a new partition line was formed, similar to the Charter VII released by UNSCOP, but even this was never agreed upon and violence soon broke out.

The OHCHR had recommended several resolutions recommending the withdrawal of security resolution 497 passed by the UNSC and more (see chap. VIII, E/CN.4/2005/L.10/Add.8). The OHCHR has held several special summits and committee sessions from 1998-2006 and have played a key role in inspecting human rights situations in the region before the formation of the HRC in 2006. The HRC has hosted 5 Special Committee Sessions to discuss this issue (7th, 9th, 12th, 21st, 28th).

The Israeli government continued to enforce severe and discriminatory restrictions on Palestinians' human rights; restrict the movement of people and goods into and out of the Gaza Strip; and facilitate the unlawful transfer of Israeli citizens to settlements in the occupied West Bank. Israeli forces stationed on the Israeli side of the fences separating Gaza and Israel responded to demonstrations for Palestinian rights on the Gaza side with exces-

sive lethal force. Between March 30 and November 19, security forces killed 189 Palestinian demonstrators, including 31 children and 3 medical workers, and wounded more than 5,800 with live fire. Demonstrators threw rocks and "Molotov cocktails," used slingshots to hurl projectiles, and launched kites bearing incendiary materials, which caused significant property damage to nearby Israeli communities, and, in at least one instance, fired towards soldiers. Officers repeatedly fired on protesters who posed no imminent threat to life, pursuant to expansive open-fire orders from senior officials that contravene international human rights law standards. In May, the United Nations Human Rights Council set-up a commission of inquiry to investigate the events in Gaza, with a view to identifying those responsible, including in the chain of command, and ensuring accountability.

The Israeli army also launched intermittent air and artillery strikes in the Gaza Strip, killing 37 Palestinians between March 30 and November 19, including at least five civilians. Palestinian armed groups fired 1138 rockets and mortars indiscriminately toward Israel from Gaza as of November 13, according to the Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, a major increase over previous years, killing one person and injuring at least 40, including civilians. Attempts to reconcile did not end the rivalry between Palestinian groups Fatah and Hamas. Both the Fatah-dominated Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza arrested op-

position supporters and other critics, and mistreated and tortured some in their custody. The Independent Commission for Human Rights in Palestine (ICHR), a statutory commission charged with monitoring human rights compliance by the Palestinian authorities, received 180 complaints of arbitrary arrest, 173 complaints of torture and ill-treatment, and 209 complaints of administrative detention pursuant to orders from a regional governor by PA security forces as of October 31. In the same period, the body recorded 81 complaints of arbitrary arrest and 146 complaints of torture and ill-treatment against Hamas security forces.

Israel continued to maintain its more than decade-long effective closure of Gaza, exacerbated by Egyptian restrictions on its own border with Gaza, limiting access to water and electricity (households in Gaza received power between four and five hours a day on average during most of the year). Israel also restricted access to medical care and educational and economic opportunities. In July, in response to the launching of incendiary kites from Gaza, Israeli authorities banned the shipment of most goods out of Gaza, limited entry to “humanitarian” items and temporarily reduced the fishing zone off the Gaza coast from six to three nautical miles, measures that amount to collective punishment. Gaza’s unemployment rate stood at 55 percent during the third-quarter of 2018, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, and 80 percent of Gaza’s nearly 2 million people depend on humanitarian aid.



Human Rights Conditions in Eritrea

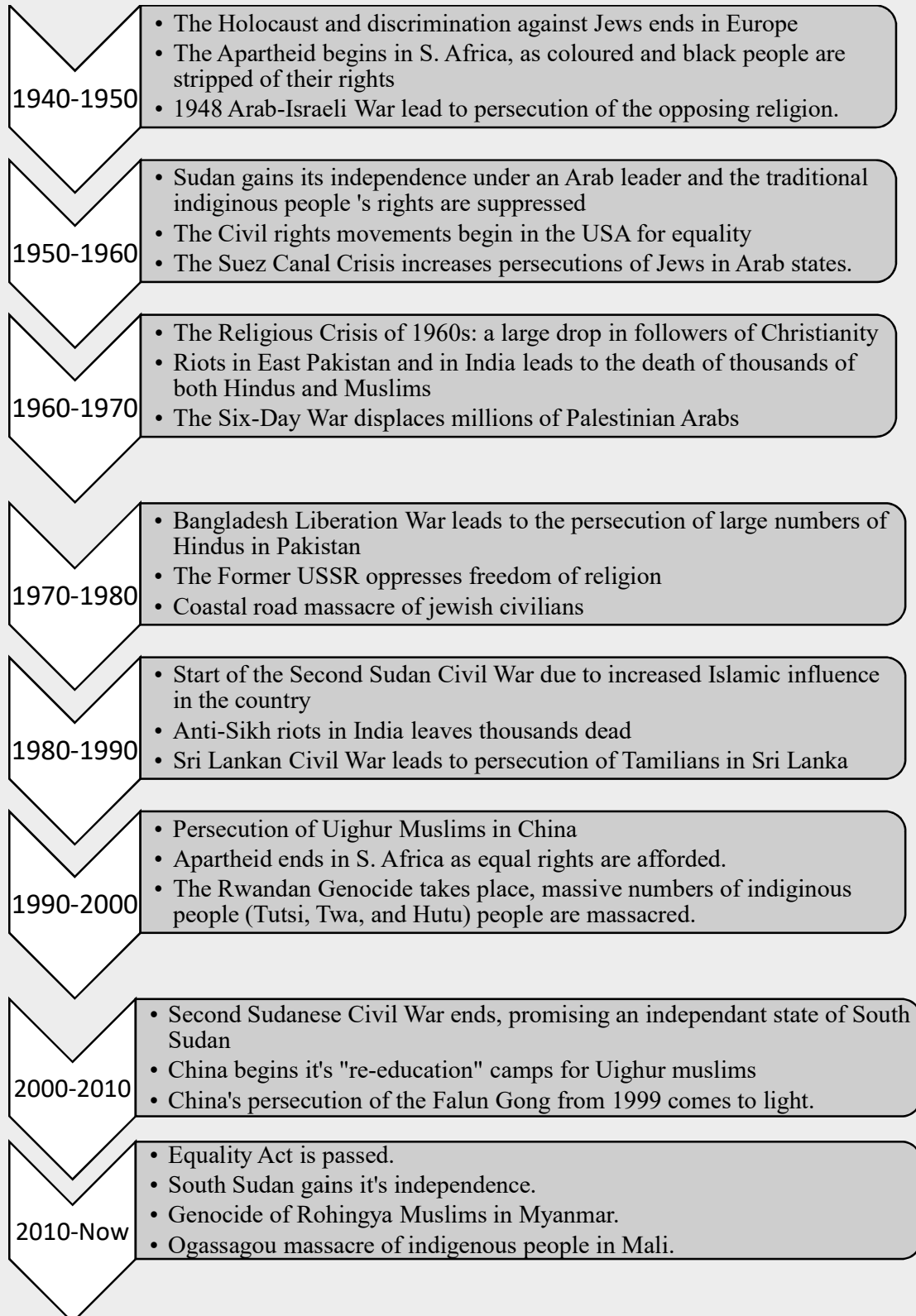
Once called the ‘single ray of hope in the horn of Africa’ it has now descended into an oppressive regime revolving around a cruel dictator that suppresses the rights of the press and religion due to the war with Ethiopia (1998-2000). President Isaias, freed from all institutional restraints, uses well-documented tactics of repression, showing little signs of easing up in 2017. The populace is closely monitored. Offenses include seeming to question authority attempting to avoid national service or to flee the country, practicing an “unrecognized” religion, or simply offending someone in authority. After witnessing the ordeal family members and others face when trying to exercise their rights, ordinary citizens have come to realize they are not allowed any rights. Eritreans are subject to arbitrary imprisonment. Arrest and harsh punishment including torture, are at the whim of security force commanders without trial or appeal. Few are told the reason for their arrests. Im-

prisonment is indefinite and often incommunicado; some arrestees disappear altogether. For example, an individual was arrested and held since 2002 but never charged and not allowed visits or other communications with his family for 15 years. His body was released to his family in August.

In a recent visit to the country, members of the European Parliament noted that there is no precise data about the levels of food insecurity in Eritrea. The World Food Program (WFP) suspended food distribution programs after a policy clash: the government monetized all food aid and seized WFP stocks in 2006, stating that it was implementing a cash-for-work program in lieu of food aid distribution. The Eritrean government has also placed extensive restrictions on the operations of international nongovernmental aid organizations (NGOs). In 2005 it adopted new registration requirements that required international organizations to have US\$2 million in capital in Eritrea, imposed taxes on all imports including food, among other provisions, and in 2006

expelled a number of international nongovernmental organizations working in the country. Currently there is only one national nongovernmental organization registered under the 2005 NGO proclamation and the work of the nine remaining international NGOs is extremely circumscribed. The EU report concluded that: While there are no independent verifications for reports about ‘silent famine’ and extreme malnutrition, several indicators suggest the risk of a humanitarian crisis as in other Horn of Africa countries. Food subsistence has been down from about 70-75 percent in 2007 to 30-35 percent this year due to the drought. Given the high food and fuel prices (Eritrea being 100 percent dependent on oil imports) and the weakness of the economy, it is unclear how additional food imports can be financed. After 60 days of overdue payment of debt obligations, the World Bank had to suspend the payment of new credits end of October 2008 for the first time.

Timeline of events:



Important points to note

1. The Freeze Date for this committee is 31st January 2020. All events after this date will be considered null and void during committee. Only events that had taken place before this date will be taken into consideration.
2. The Human Rights Council is NOT A CRISIS COMMITTEE.
3. For the benefit of the committee there will be changes to the voting procedures.
The changes are as follows.
 - To encourage fair competition all the Countries in the committee will be given voting rights including observer nations.
4. The powers of the committee will be the typical, General Assembly mandate which consists only Recommendatory powers.
5. This committee will be open to chits at all points in the duration of the conference. The executive board highly recommends the usage of chits as it would enable us to receive your points better.
6. We have introduced countries that were not originally a part of the HRC, this has been done to benefit committee and to add new perspectives in debate.
7. No country in this committee will be given observer status, everyone will be given equal member status just for the duration of the conference.
8. Since this committee will be taking place online, the executive board will try to make committee as identical as a committee in real life, but expects you to co-operate in the case of any technical difficulties.

Information regarding the position paper

The Model UN position paper is useful to the Executive Board as a way of understanding the stance and preparation of every delegate in committee, as well as to delegates as a way of ensuring that their research touches upon all necessary topics. Successful position papers normally –

- Outline how the agenda is relevant to the delegate's country
- Discuss the delegate's country's current policy on the issue
- Introduce solutions that have been effective within the delegate's country that they wish to bring to the international community at the conference
- Bring out unique solutions that the delegate has thought about

It is fine if more stress is put upon one of these areas and less on another; this is just general advice on how most position papers are structured. Remember to cite all sources at the end of the document using either APA, MLA, or Chicago as a citation style. These can be generated using <http://www.citationmachine.net/#>. Plagiarism in position papers may result in the delegate being disqualified.

As for the format, ensure that you write your name, country name, committee, and agenda on the top left of the document. Your position paper should be written in Times New Roman, font size 12 and should be around 1 page (approximately 600 words) long (this length excludes the bibliography at the end).

Feel free to refer to sites like UNAUSA and best delegate for more advice on how to make an effective position paper. You can also contact the Executive Board of your respective committee for further clarifications.

Useful links

1. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents-all>
2. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/religious-persecution-on_b_7870614
3. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_persecution#Persecution_of_Serers(

Note: only use Wikipedia for your own reference, citing Wikipedia in committee will not be allowed)

4. <https://www.cfr.org/conference-calls/persecution-religious-minorities>