

Hilton 2021

General Assembly

Committee Overview

Persecution of Journalists in Russia

Human–Elephant Conflict in Southeast Asia

Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iran

Committee Description

This committee will be run Harvard style, meaning that resolutions cannot be written until the committee is in session. As such, any delegate found to be using pre-written clauses will be disqualified from committee awards, and their resolution(s) will not be accepted.

Delegates must write at least one position paper to be considered for an award, although we encourage participants to write as many quality papers as possible. Position papers must be emailed to both chairs before the start of committee.

The General Assembly's focus is on debate, discussion, and recommendations about international peace and security, disarmament, human rights, international law, and other international issues. Delegates should be well informed on their country's policies on the topics and should stick to them throughout the conference. Remember to have some fun with this; Model UN is about more than just awards!

Chairs

Savni Gupta | savnigupta3@gmail.com

Hey delegates! My name is Savni Gupta, and I'm a senior from Brighton High School. I've been attending Model UN conferences for three years now, but this is my first time chairing! Outside of this club, I'm an officer for both my school's Mock Trial Team and our Brighton Teen Institute CLub, as well as a member of the math team and a part of the swim team. Please don't hesitate to email either of us if you have any questions. I can't wait to see you in committee!

Oren Polshuck | poleshuckkinelo2022@365.bcsd.org

Hello delegates! My name is Oren Polshuck Kinelo, and this is my second time chairing but my third year in Model UN. I'm a senior at Brighton High School, and I participate in Science Olympiad, my school's newspaper, and play soccer. Please don't hesitate to email either of us if you have any questions. I'm looking forward to a great conference!

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Persecution of Journalists in Russia



Since 2000, when Vladimir Putin came to power, 21 Russian journalists have been killed.

Many say that this is because of Russian suppression of free speech. In fact, 235 journalists from 63 countries signed a letter by Russian student-run news outlet DOXA stating “Russia’s independent media are under serious threat.”

Journalists have been detained for peaceful protests, investigating police corruption, and taking other anti-government opinions.

Much of Russian media is state-owned, and the media that isn’t has been forced to exercise self-censorship by the Russian government, which has even labeled news outlets as “foreign agents.” In addition, the Kremlin has passed multiple anti-free speech laws in the last decade.

In fact, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, Russia is a more dangerous place for a journalist to be now than it was during the Cold War. The 2021 Press Freedom Index, compiled by Reporters without Borders, noted a difficult situation regarding media freedom, ranking 149 out of 179 total countries surveyed.

Still, Russia claims that there is no significant issue with media freedom, with its constitution guaranteeing freedom of speech and press.

How can freedom of the press be upheld in Russia? What actions should the UN take to best achieve this freedom?

Sources:

Human Rights Watch: Russia: Dozens of Journalists Detained for Peaceful Protests
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/07/10/russia-dozens-journalists-detained-peaceful-protests>

Reuters: Russian journalists fear growing media persecution after treason arrest
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-detention-treason/russian-journalists-fear-growing-media-persecution-after-treason-arrest-idUSKBN2492B5>

Committee to Protect Journalists: Russia Archives
<https://cpj.org/europe/russia/>

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Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iran



Iran has always had a stake in Nuclear energy; its history goes back to the 1950s, where the Shah received technical assistance through the US Atoms for Peace Program. That interest continued through the 1979 Iranian revolution, after which they began developing an extensive nuclear fuel cycle and bolstering enrichment capabilities, leading many nations to fear that they would soon acquire a weapon of mass destruction. As a result, the UN began threatening sanctions on the nation in 2006 through UN Security Council Resolution 1696, with these sanctions coming into effect in 2007.

So, on July 14, 2015, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, more commonly known as the Iran Nuclear Deal, aimed to resolve this by restricting the level of Iran's Uranium enrichment and imposing intense oversight of the nation's nuclear facilities in exchange for lifting sanctions on Iran.

In 2018, however, the US withdrew from the deal and reimposed sanctions on Iran. As a result, Iran's economy collapsed but it also increased its uranium supply and level of enrichment. Under the deal, Iran was only permitted 202.8 kg of Uranium, but they possessed 2,442.9 kg as of 2019. Similarly, the deal capped the enrichment level of Iran's uranium at 3.67%, but currently, that level is at over 4.5%. All of this means that experts suggest if motivated, Iran could acquire a nuclear weapon within 3.5 months. Nonetheless, Iran insists that it is not seeking nuclear weapons, a claim corroborated by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

How can the UN prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon? How can the UN convince member states to lift sanctions if a deal is reached? Does Iran have a right to possess nuclear weapons?

Sources:

Council on Foreign Relations: What is the Iran Nuclear Deal?
<https://www.cfr.org/background/what-iran-nuclear-deal>

The White House: The Historic Deal that Will Prevent Iran from Acquiring a Nuclear Weapon
<https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/issues/foreign-policy/iran-deal>

BBC: Iran Nuclear Crisis in 300 Words
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-48201138>

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Demilitarizing the Tigray region in Ethiopia



Once viewed as a harbinger for peace and prosperity within Ethiopia, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who ascended to power in 2018, manages a country now embroiled in the year's deadliest conflict.

Abiy has shown a firm resolve to unify his nation's political groups. His new Prosperity Party, for instance, seeks to bring Ethiopia's many ethnic groups under one national party. Ethiopia's Tigray population, though, has been skeptical of Abiy's true intentions. The ethnic group's main faction, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), has criticized his peace deals with Eritrea, a nation that the faction saw as an enemy throughout its rule. Additionally, many TPLF leaders have also been removed from office or jailed during his tenure, fueling distrust of Abiy and his Prosperity Party. Tensions further escalated after Abiy delayed the 2020 national election due to concerns about COVID-19. The TPLF reacted by holding an unofficial election, which they overwhelmingly won. In response, Abiy cut off all federal funding to the Tigray region, and both sides mobilized armed forces soon thereafter.

The national government has effectively shut off cellular connections, the internet, and various other forms of technology and communication from the Tigray region since the beginning of the conflict late last year, making it difficult for journalists and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to report on human rights violations. Many experts have blamed ethnic violence for a November schoolyard massacre in which over 50 laborers were hacked to death, although it is difficult to pinpoint specific details about the attack.

Foreign powers have also intervened, raising fears that the situation may turn into a proxy war. In early March, the NGO Human Rights Watch reported that Eritrean forces massacred hundreds of Tigray civilians in November. Sudan has also ramped up military training procedures after several border skirmishes with Ethiopian forces.

The delegates of the Disarmament committee should analyze the danger of past and present war crimes as a result of this conflict and evaluate the potential involvement of foreign nations. Through these means, the United Nations can allow the Tigray region and surrounding regions to return to peace with minimal damage.

How can the international community bring about a peaceful demilitarization in Ethiopia and surrounding nations? What should the United Nations do about human rights violations in the region? How can the United Nations initiate an agreement between the TPLF and Abiy's Prosperity Party?

Sources:

BBC: Ethiopia's Tigray crisis: The long, medium, and short story
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-54964378>

NY Times: Dozens Killed in Ethiopia in Schoolyard Massacre
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/02/world/africa/ethiopia-school-massacre.html>

Reuters: Spillover from Tigray conflict adds to pressure on Sudan
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-ethiopia-conflict-sudan-analysis/analysis-spillover-from-tigray-conflict-adds-to-pressure-on-sudan-idUSKBN28S1VS>