Hilton 2019

Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural

Committee Overview

SHC is run Harvard Style, which means that delegates are not permitted to draft resolutions until the day of the conference. Additionally, it is highly recommended that every delegate writes at least one position paper on a topic, as doing so is a requirement to be considered for an award. However, we recommend a position paper for each topic. Delegates should come to the conference ready to discuss all topics and be well versed in the policies of the country they are representing at the conference.

The purpose of SHC is to work to address and solve social, humanitarian, and cultural issues across the world. This will expose you to a number of human rights issues and minority issues across the world. By sticking to your countries' policies, we can have fruitful debate over a wide range of topics.

Committee Description

Emergence of Neo-Nazis

Mental Health Awareness in the Horn of Africa

Persecution of Muslim Uighurs in China

Addressing the Role of Biometric Data Usage within Refugee Camps

Chairs

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I am a senior at Brighton High School, and this will be my first-time chairing in my three years of Model UN. Apart from Model UN, I play baseball on my school's varsity team, am a member of clubs such as Natural Helpers, and enjoy fantasy football as well as hip hop, acoustic, and folk music.

I am a senior at Pittsford-Mendon High School, and this will also be my first-time chairing in my fourth year of Model UN. I play tennis and am active in a number of clubs including my schools finance and badminton clubs.

Emergence of Neo-Nazis

Neo-Nazism is a militant social or political movement seeking to revive the ideology of Adolf Hitler, Nazism. Although many countries around the world have made it illegal to express pro-Nazi ideas, the movement is still seeing growth and doing damage across the world, as Neo-Nazi groups operate in all 6 of the major continents and maintaining a large presence in Europe and the Americas.

What is especially troubling is the lack of initiative to combat the issue in countries where the issue is most prominent and growing, notably within the United States. In just the first year of Donald Trump's presidency, Neo-Nazi groups in the United States saw unprecedented growth, increasing nearly 22% in size nationwide. Many, even prominent political figures such as 2020 hopeful Beto O'Rourke point to Trump as not only encouraging these groups and their hateful actions, but directly causing it with his rhetoric, and has openly called the president a white nationalist. On August 3, 2019, a lone white gunman shot and killed 22 people, and injured 24 more at an El Paso Walmart. Just prior to the shooting, the perpetrator published an anti-immigration manifesto with ideas perpetuated by Trump as well as the Christchurch, New Zealand mosque shooter from earlier in the year, which left 51 dead. In addition, the shooter had openly shared his support for Trump and prominent alt-right figures like Alex Jones and Joseph Watson on his Twitter account.

Neo-Nazism and white supremacy do not have a place in the world today. Both are ideologies fueled by hatred and violence, and while efforts to combat the issue have been made, much more needs to be done, especially at the top, if we wish to live in a world without Neo-Nazism and white supremacy.

Do Neo-Nazis have the right to express their views under freedom of speech? What should the United Nations do to combat existing Neo-Nazi Groups? How can the UN implement effective measures without infringing on national sovereignty? How can awareness be spread to prevent new groups from coming into existence as well as decrease action taken by individuals?

Sources:

https://www.dw.com/en/us-neo-nazi-groups-on-the-rise-under-president-donald-trump-report/a-42688331

https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/white-nationalism-fueled-violence-rise-fbi-slow-call-it-domestic-n1039206

https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/04/politics/beto-orourke-trump-white-nationalist-cnntv/

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Mental Health Awareness in the Horn of Africa

While leaps and bounds have been made in the realm of mental health in the developed world, that is far from the truth in the rest of the world. In the Horn of Africa, access to clean water is limited, infectious diseases run rampant, and many do not know where their next meal is coming among a plethora of issues. As a result, mental health is often pushed to the wayside or forgotten about by policymakers in this region, evidenced by the fact that underdeveloped countries allocate nearly ten times less to mental health expenditures than developed countries. However, this must change, as there is a strong link between poverty and being at an increased risk for mental health disorders.

An unacceptable 75% of people who suffer from mental illnesses in low-income African countries do not have access to the treatment they need. Over 1/3 of Somalia's population suffers from mental illness, yet they only have five mental health facilities in the entire country. Furthermore, high belief in the supernatural leads many who suffer from mental afflictions to be identified as possessed by evil spirits and, as a result, ostracized from society or abused.

Some countries in the region are making steps in the right direction, such as Ethiopia, who has been increasing their budget for mental health since implementing a new plan in 2013. However, the percentage of the total GDP they and other countries in the Horn of Africa spend on mental health is still far behind the developed countries. In order to properly address the issue, more must be done.

How can the UN take steps to increase awareness in the Horn of Africa? How can awareness be raised while preserving cultural beliefs of the people of the Horn of Africa? What consequences will result if mental health remains neglected in the region?

Sources:

http://www.emro.who.int/som/programmes/mental-health.html

https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(18)30303-6/fulltext

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1489826/

Persecution of Muslim Uighurs in China

China is currently a battleground for the Uighur people. Everyday their rights are attacked and their lives are put at risk. There are currently an estimated 1 million wrongfully detained Uighurs in the Xinjiang Province of Western China. After initially out-right denying these claims, the Chinese government now states that it is, "sending an unspecified number of people for vocational training, free of charge". Despite these twisted words from China and coerced coverups from nations like Saudi Arabia, the Uighur people still have their rights abused and freedoms stripped away in Prison camps every day.

The treatment of these people in China, such as stripping away their religion and freedom, violates numerous articles of one of the most profound and long-lasting UN Resolutions, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. SHC was founded, in part, to uphold the values stated in this resolution, and to protect marginalized people around the world.

Should China remain unchecked, it is likely that his problem will continue. However, many nations practice similar discriminations against minority religious and ethnic groups in their own borders, although often to a lesser extent. Therefore, this issue is not only specific to China, but rather can be viewed as an opportunity to improve the lives of marginalized groups fighting systematically oppressive governments across the world.

Does China have the right to control its population's religious views? Are these camps infringing on the rights of the Uighur people, or are they within China's national sovereignty? What should be done to decommission existing camps and prevent the construction of more camps?

Sources:

https://jacobinmag.com/2019/06/china-uyghur-persecution-concentration-camps

https://qz.com/1599393/how-researchers-estimate-1-million-uyghurs-are-detained-in-xinjiang/

https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-22278037

Addressing the Role of Biometric Data Usage within Refugee Camps

Biometric data is the use of things such as fingerprints or retina scans to identify people. These methods can be more reliable and less time-consuming than traditional paperwork registrations. They can also be more secure, as people are unable to lie about their identities. Their usage can reduce the egregious wait times in refugee camps, can improve countries' confidence in accepting refugees, and can aide families in reconnecting through different refugee camps.

Currently, many camps have implemented their own systems of biometric date to expedite the registration process, however there are currently no universal registration systems. A system such as that would be costly to set up, but also would help families reconnect, would help camps improve their record keeping, and would easy the transfer and acceptance of refugees.

Despite its benefits, the use of biometrics also comes with drawbacks. Primarily, it is very expensive. Many refugee camps already operate on a shoestring budget and would rather spend on food and shelter. Asking them to pay for setting up biometric stations would be nearly impossible. Secondly, many countries, such as Switzerland, highly value privacy, and are unwilling to collect this amount of data on their citizens and refugees.

Overall, a universal biometric system could have many benefits, although it would be very costly. A cost-effective system across multiple camps, focusing on reuniting families, tracking refugees, and the transferring process could benefit both high volume refugee countries like Sweden and the refugees themselves.

Is a universal biometric system worth the cost of its development and implementation? How can privacy concerns be addressed? What can be done to reduce the cost of this system without reducing its effectiveness?

Sources:

https://borgenproject.org/biometric-identification-refugee-camps/

https://sites.google.com/a/maine.edu/biometrics/pros-cons

https://www.raptim.org/humanitarian-future-biometric-data/