

Hilton 2021

UNHRC

Committee Overview

Safety of Refugees of Conflict

Police Brutality Amid Colombian Tax Reform Protests

Stigmatization of the Deaf Community in Developing Nations

Committee Description

This committee will be run Harvard Style, meaning that resolutions are not to be written until the date of the conference itself. Additionally, it is highly suggested that every delegate write at least one position paper on a topic, as doing so will be necessary to be considered for an award, which must be emailed to the chairs two days prior to the start of committee.

All delegates are expected to come to the first day of the conference with a working knowledge of all or most of the topics, as well as the policies of the countries that they represent. As UNHRC, this committee will focus on interpersonal issues in society and promoting human rights globally. And remember that Model UN is not a competition, so get to researching and try to have a little fun!

Chairs

Sasha Belyablya | sbelyablya@gmail.com

Hello delegates! My name is Sasha Belyablya, and I'm a junior at Pittsford Mendon High School. This is my third year in Model UN and my second time chairing. Outside of MUN, I'm the president of my school's debate club and compete in Deca and finance club. I also enjoy playing violin and visiting my family in Ukraine. Feel free to email me with any questions!

Alan Raskin | araskin2005@gmail.com

Hi Delegates! My name is Alan Raskin, and I'm a senior at Pittsford Sutherland High School. I'm so excited to be chairing for the fourth time in my fourth year in MUN. Outside of committee, I'm president of my school's Best Buddies and GSA chapters, and you may catch me cashiering at Wegmans on the weekends. If you have any questions, comments, or just want to say hi, don't hesitate to send an email!

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Safety of Refugees of Conflict



Refugees displaced due to conflict are highly vulnerable to violence, exploitation, and unjust conditions of survival. Many are often forced to take dangerous courses of action to survive with little protection against human rights abuses.

Furthermore, the vast majority of countries that host refugees are developing nations, where there is limited access to food, water, education, or safety. One example comes from Sudan, where a UNHCR spokesperson noted that those displaced due to conflict in the Darfur region have poor, makeshift shelter that does little to protect against the 104°F daytimes.

Another example comes from Bangladesh, where, in 2017, the government opened its borders to Rohingya refugees after a military campaign of ethnic cleansing in Myanmar, in which Rohingya access to internet and telecommunication was blocked for one year. Over 20,000 Rohingya and 8,000 children moved from a refugee settlement in Cox's

Bazar to Bhasan Char Island, a remote island in the Bay of Bengal.

Refugees describe being lured onto the island with the false promise of food, shelter, a livelihood, health care, schooling, etc. Later, cyclones and tidal surges caused flooding on the remote island, leaving refugees marooned by the Bangladesh government in horrible conditions. These refugees faced inadequate health care and education, movement restrictions, food shortages, a lack of livelihood opportunities, and abuses by security forces. This resulted in thousands of Rohingya fleeing in May of 2021; thousands of refugees in Bhasan Char Island broke out of shelters and were beaten by police, injuring women and children.

Officials in Bangladesh committed arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings. With another monsoon season on the horizon, Rohingya on the island fear for their safety, and they are not alone. UNHCR reported a record high of people displaced by war, conflict, and violence, totaling 82.4 million in 2020. As refugees of conflict are often displaced from their families, communities, and homes, they have few options for safety without the help of UNHCR.

How can UNHRC better provide refugee host locations with adequate supplies to support those displaced there? What can be implemented to deter exploitation of refugees of conflict? Can certain peacekeeping efforts effectively prevent victims of conflict from forcible relocation?

Sources:

VOA - Forced Displacement from Conflicts:

<https://www.voanews.com/africa/un-forced-displacement-conflicts-soaring-despite-pandemic>

Al Jazeera - Rohingya Refugees Missing:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/14/dozens-of-rohingya-refugees-missing-as-boat-sinks-off-bangladesh>

OHCHR - Eritrean Tigray Conflict:

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27366&LangID=E>

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Police Brutality Amid Colombian Tax Reform Protests



Amid COVID-19, Colombia's GDP dropped by 6.8% in 2020, pushing 3.6 million Colombians into poverty. In response, the Colombian government proposed a tax restructuring plan which was met by concerns over its economic inequality, rising taxes, and healthcare restructuring. This sparked protests which were a continuation of nationwide demonstrations in 2019 over riot police brutality. Now, about 2,300 civilians have been injured with over 50 deaths. Police officers responded by arbitrarily dispersing peaceful demonstrations and detaining demonstrators and bystanders. Hundreds of reports detail the indiscriminate use of firearms, killing, beating, and sexually abusing civilians.

Protesters' roadblocks have resulted in significant economic loss, as farmers cannot deliver their goods to markets, transportation companies are stuck in traffic, and city residents cannot freely transport. Meanwhile, protests put vulnerable groups at increased risk. The Non-Governmental Organization Temblores says it has received 132 reports of sexually violent acts committed by police between 2017 and 2021, of

which 90% have not been processed by legal bodies. In addition, indigenous groups are among those hardest hit by the continuing violence in rural protest areas. According to peace institute Indepaz, 22 indigenous leaders have been killed by the protests as Colombians demand increased protection in indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities.

President Duque ruled out the dismantling of the riot police, stalling talks between protesters and governing bodies. In response to a human rights inquiry, the President suggested improvements to the police force such as the establishment of a human rights department, an improved system for tracking citizen complaints, and increased disciplinary standards for personnel. Rights organizations show concern that even if the changes succeed, the police would remain under defense ministry jurisdiction that will continue judging abuse cases, which they consider a problematic possibility.

This committee must address the human rights violations committed by riot officers while taking into account the political, economic and social structure of Colombia.

What solutions can address the increased risk of women and indigenous groups? How can governmental reforms ensure due process of state officers? What can be done to ensure victims of state violence have the resources to seek justice?

Sources:

BBC – Colombia's Protests Unlikely to Fizzle Out:
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-56986821>

Human Rights Watch:
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/06/09/colombia-egregious-police-abuses-against-protesters>

Crisis Group – Colombia's Mass Protests:
<https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/andes/colombia/90-pandemic-strikes-responding-colombias-mass-protests>

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Stigmatization of the Deaf Community in Developing Nations



Of the 70 million deaf people in the world, 80% live in developing nations. However, many rights of access sometimes deemed commonplace in developed nations are inaccessible to this 80% majority, such as basic sanitation and education.

One of the most widespread ways in which the deaf community is stigmatized in these nations starts at birth, as there are often few or no resources to teach deaf children sign language, and only 1 in 40 deaf people who need hearing aids receive them. The problem is especially worse in rural communities of these nations, which are not only geographically isolated from the rest of their nation but oftentimes linguistically isolated as well. As a result, many deaf children become disconnected from language education entirely during their most crucial developmental years. The World Federation of the Deaf estimates that 90% of deaf children and adults have never been to school, and many are illiterate.

These developmental disparities typically turn into social injustices. There exist several peddling rings worldwide, notable in Mexico and France, in which deaf individuals in developing nations are exploited and forced into selling trinkets and other goods at tourist attractions and airports. Often considered slaves, these individuals do not profit whatsoever off of the money they receive. A similar situation was reported in 2011 in Yaoundé and Douala, where exploiters gave promises of wealth to young deaf Cameroonians who were then forced into stealing and experienced sexual violence.

Furthermore, deaf communities receive little legal support in these nations. Twenty-six nations impose some form of restriction on deaf individuals' right to receive a driver's license. Other nations have restrictions on voting, property-owning, marriage, and even having children, all on the basis of hearing ability. Furthermore, socioeconomic and geographic isolation leaves deaf people outside of urban centers unaware of the rights they have within their nation, should they exist. Due to the economic stagnation of many developing nations themselves, their deaf communities require international assistance to advance in their communities.

How can crucial legal information reach deaf individuals outside of urban centers? What actions can the committee take to better provide language learning to deaf children? What programs can be internationally implemented to better prevent deaf individuals from exploitation and violence?

Sources:

World Federation of the Deaf:

<https://wfdeaf.org/our-work/human-rights-of-the-deaf/#:~:text=Deaf%20people%20need%20to%20have,jury%20member%20or%20reproduce%20children>

Childhood Deafness in Developing Countries:

<https://www.ndcs.org.uk/deaf-child-worldwide/childhood-deafness-in-developing-countries/>

Hearing Loss in Developing Countries:

<https://www.borgenmagazine.com/hearing-loss-in-developing-countries/>