

Background Guide

15th Annual AUSMUN



**United Nations Security Council - Highschool
(UNSC-HS)**

Welcome Letter from the Director of Research



Greetings fellow delegates,

It's a pleasure to see you attending the American University of Sharjah's 2022 Model United Nations Convention (AUSMUN 2022). As the age-old adage goes, "with great power comes great responsibility," as delegates of nations at the world's largest international forum, you have a heightened degree of power and responsibility. Not only do you have a say in shaping solutions for the world, and bringing glory to your country, but also the pressure of ensuring that those solutions are pragmatic, feasible, and effective in solving the issues you have set to resolve. Not only do you have a space at the international platform, but also the responsibility to ensure that you set an apt example of your nation for the world to see.

With that being said, I wish you all the best for your preparations and I am really excited to see what your wonderful minds and enthusiastic selves come up with in the committee rooms. Finally, also remember that your responsibilities include having fun and making the best of your time at AUSMUN 2022!

Best Regards,
Mohammad Amaan Siddiqui
Director of Research - AUSMUN 2022



Welcome Letter from the Dais

Dear Delegates,

It is with immense pleasure that we welcome you to the AUSMUN 2022, and to the United Nations Security Council. We look forward to meeting you all and are thrilled to hear your discussion and ideas. We expect three days of intense debate and cooperating delegates to come together and solve the issues our world currently faces.

Being one of the largest conferences in the region, AUSMUN calls for a lot of preparation before the conference with adequate research on the topics, well-detailed position papers and brush up on the committee terms. Hopefully, this background guide will be the perfect starting point for your research and provide all you need to know about the intricacies of the UN Security Council. Moreover, we request you to use the delegate handbook provided by the conference as a primary guide for the Rules of Procedures and formats of documents you will require to submit. Do keep this in mind: whether it is your first conference or your last, dedicate your energy to having productive committee sessions that not only focus on smart rebuttals during the debate but also form resolutions that aim at minimizing the problems at hand. We have complete confidence that this conference will be an enjoyable and effective learning experience for all.

For any questions or queries, feel free to reach out to us (unschausmun2022@gmail.com). We wish you the best of luck, and may the odds be ever in your favor.

Best Regards,
AbdelRahman AbdelTwab and Afrah Shuja, Chairs
Shivani Nair, Research Assistant

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Overview of the Committee

Several international bodies attempted to reduce violence and resolve concerns a century before the United Nations was formed. Some popular examples include the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Hague Conventions. Following the horrors of World War I (WW1), the Paris Peace Conference, also known as the Versailles Peace Conference, convened in 1919 to establish The League of Nations to address many conflicts. The League of Nations, on the other hand, was a deeply flawed organization that lacked representation from most of the world and failed to avoid numerous regional crises, as well as World War II (WW2) (United Nations Charter).

History

The United Nations Security Council met for the first time on January 17, 1946, in Church House in Westminster, London. The Security Council has had a permanent home at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City since its first meeting. It also visited a number of locations, including Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 1972; Panama City, Panama, and Geneva, Switzerland, in 1990. The United Nations Charter assigns primary responsibility for ensuring international peace and security to the Security Council. If peace is imperiled, the Council may convene at any time. In contrast to the decisions made by the General Assembly, all Member States are obligated under the UN Charter to carry out the Security Council's decisions (United Nations Charter).

When presented with such a situation, the Security Council looks for peaceful methods to resolve the conflict. It may propose principles for a peaceful settlement to the parties, appoint special representatives, request the Secretary-General's offices, or conduct an inquiry and mediation. It has refined the use of non-military measures such as arms embargoes, travel bans, and limits to prevent the exploitation of natural resources to fuel wars, as well as taking the lead in international counter-terrorism coordination. The Council attempts to secure a truce if a dispute has escalated into an armed conflict (United Nations, Article 39).

Beyond this, the Council may opt for enforcement measures, including economic sanctions, arms embargoes, financial penalties and restrictions, and travel bans; severance of diplomatic relations; blockade; or even collective military action (United Nations Charter, Article 42).

One of the most pressing concerns is focusing action on those responsible for international community-condemned policies or practices while minimizing the impact of the actions imposed on other sectors of the population and economy.

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Overview of the Committee

Structure and Functions

The United Nations is composed of 15 member states, 5 of which are permanent (United States, United Kingdom, Russia, China and France) and the remaining are elected by the General Assembly every 1-2 years (United Nations Charter, Article 23). However, as per Article 31 of the UN Charter, any party not a member of the UNSC but that is involved in the dispute being discussed may be invited, without a vote, to the meetings (the concept of observer states in a particular meeting).

As per the Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council's primary function is to maintain international peace and security in accordance with the principles and purposes of the United Nations. It also plays an integral role in investigating any dispute or situation which might lead to international friction, a threat to peace, or an act of aggression and recommend methods of reconciling or consequential actions thereof. Among the options that the UNSC can adopt for consequential actions is the placement of economic sanctions and other peaceful means or military aggression against an actor in certain cases (UN, n.d.).

Among a few of its specific functions is the formulation of plans to regulate armaments, the appointment of the Secretary-General and election of judges of the International Court of Justice with the General Assembly. Article 25 of the UN Charter makes it the only UN organ whose decisions are binding and have to be carried out (United Nations Charter).

The UNSC can enforce its decisions in ways that do not involve the use of force. According to Article 41 of the UN Charter "The Security Council may decide what measures not involving the use of armed force are to be employed to give effect to its decisions, and it may call upon the Members of the United Nations to apply such measures. These may include complete or partial interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations."

However, if despite the working of Article 41 the dispute does not resolve, then pursuant to the following article the use of armed force is permitted: "...demonstrations, blockade, and other operations by air, sea, or land forces of Members of the United Nations." Such plans, however, have to be made with assistance from the Military Staff Committee (United Nations Charter, Article 41).

Topic I: Addressing the Increasing Tensions in the Korean Peninsula

Summary and History of the Issue

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) is known to have an active and increasingly sophisticated nuclear weapons and ballistic missile program and is believed to have chemical and biological weapon capabilities. The country's nuclear program can be traced back to the Cold War when the outbreak of the Korean War convinced Kim Il Sung of the need to amass an arsenal potent enough to defend against the United States (Wilson & Sprun, 2021). In the wake of the Korean War's armistice, the Soviet Union assisted North Korea in the research needed to achieve nuclear capability. Despite the international community's efforts to curb the proliferation of nuclear states, North Korea has withdrawn from or chosen to ignore international non-proliferation treaties and conventions. Sanctions have proved minimally effective, as North Korea continues to forge ahead in its Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) activities.

North Korea's nuclear program is of concern to the stability of the Korean Peninsula and of East Asia, more broadly. Foreign policy toward North Korea has emphasized nuclear deterrence, a strategy aimed at discouraging an adversary from taking an unwanted action by raising the costs of that action. Generally speaking, the main objective of deterrence has been to discourage the North from launching a military operation to invade South Korea; the US-ROK (Republic of Korea) alliance has been the primary instrument of showcasing a formidable defense posture that would discourage provocations from the North (Wilson & Sprun, 2021). At the same time, however, the joint military exercises carried out by the US-ROK Combined Forces Command are controversial for the fact that they aggravate the DPRK, thus exacerbating the security situation in times of heightened tension.

Topic I: Addressing the Increasing Tensions in the Korean Peninsula

Key Issues

North Korea's Nuclear Arsenal

Increasing tension on the Korean Peninsula lies in the continued efforts to build and improve nuclear weapons that North Korea has been doing, despite international calls for denuclearization. There are many reasons that North Korea insists on building weapons. The nonprofit RAND suggests that one of these is to pressure South Korea. Currently, according to the nonprofit RAND, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), has an arsenal of up to 100 weapons. There are fears these weapons could be used to target regions all across the world, especially with increasing efforts being directed by North Korea to improve delivery systems. The US-ROK, or the alliance between the United States and South Korea, works together in planning crisis management systems in case of emergency. The threat of a nuclear war has led to increasing tensions both on the Korean Peninsula and around the world as other countries in the international community are increasingly wary of a potential threat.

North Korea's Conventional Artillery Threat

Adding to the tensions of a nuclear threat is also the massive amounts of conventional artillery, including chemical weapons, that North Korea possesses. Despite the main threat that South Korea and other countries in the international community feel threatened by being nuclear weapons, North Korea possesses an increasing amount of non-nuclear weapons. According to the United States Department of Defense, North Korea has enough conventional artillery to put at extreme risk 50% of South Korea's population and economic activity, with the potential to inflict 250,000 casualties in Seoul alone. Over time, North Korea has continued to develop its artillery capacities, thereby further increasing its potential to cause damage.

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Diplomatic Tensions between North and South Korea

According to ArmsControl, tensions between North and South Korea have increased tremendously after Pyongyang (capital of North Korea) cut all communication lines and later demolished the inter-Korean liaison office in North Korea, which was built to facilitate diplomatic communications between South and North Korea (2020). This demolition took place in June of 2020, after nearly two years of regular communication between the countries that was taking place regularly since September 2018. Additionally, both North and South Korea have violated the Panmunjom Declaration, an agreement that both countries entered to cease acts considered hostile, by distributing pamphlets that spread information they want disseminated across the borders of their country.



Image Credit: BBC, 2016 (image is of the pamphlets that North Korea has spread)

Further tensions between the two countries lie with the introduction of another party, the United States. According to Arms Control, the United States and South Korea have continued to work together to denuclearize North Korea. However, North Korean representatives insist that the reason they refuse to discuss denuclearization is not for lack of a mediator, which South Korea attempts to serve as. Furthermore, North Korea claims that South Korea has not respected the diplomatic relations occurring between them by strengthening their relations with the United States before solidifying the relationship between the two countries first. These increasing tensions between the two countries contribute to tensions across the world due to fear of dangerous conflict.

Topic I: Addressing the Increasing Tensions in the Korean Peninsula

Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

2018 Inter-Korean Summit

In September 2018, President Moon Jae-in visited DPRK, where he along with Kim Jong-un issued a Pyongyang Joint Declaration that aimed to denuclearize the Korean peninsula. The 2018 inter-Korean summit has led to President Moon Jae-in being recognized as a reliable intermediary between the U.S. and DPRK. This has resulted in Kim Jong-un promising to visit Seoul by the end of 2018.

US-DPRK Alliance

According to USIP (2019), the US and North Korea agreed to develop “new US-DPRK ties” and “join their efforts to construct a permanent and stable peace regime on the Korean Peninsula” at the historic Singapore Summit in June 2018. North Korea also stated that it will strive toward “complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.”

Strengthening Security in Northeast Asia by USIP

USIP engages governmental and nongovernmental officials from South Korea, Japan, China, and other relevant countries on a regular basis to strengthen security in Northeast Asia and reduce the risk of violent conflict on the Korean Peninsula. These private meetings, which take place on a regular basis, provide an opportunity to discuss insights and policy ideas that could not otherwise be shared through formal diplomatic channels (USIP, 2019).

Six Party Talks, First Round, 2003

The agreement reached upon the conclusion of these talks included working to address the nuclear problem via peaceful means and discussion, achieving a nuclear-free Korean peninsula while respecting North Korea’s security and avoiding actions that might exacerbate the situation further (ACA, 2018).

Six Party Talks, Fourth Round, 2005

North Korea agreed to give up all nuclear weapons and current projects in exchange for a return to the NPT and acceptance of IAEA inspections. In exchange, the other parties agreed to consider the provision of a light-water nuclear reactor “at a suitable moment” and expressed their appreciation for North Korea’s declaration of a right to peaceful nuclear energy. The US and South Korea both indicated that they would not install nuclear weapons on the peninsula and that they, together with Russia, China, and Japan, would be willing to provide energy assistance to North Korea. Furthermore, the US and Japan vowed to cooperate together to normalize relations with North Korea (ACA, 2018).

Topic I: Addressing the Increasing Tensions in the Korean Peninsula

Questions a Resolution Should Address

1. What are the effects of current sanctions on North Korea?
2. Are there any trade agreements in place between the states? What have they historically traded?
3. Is there a possibility of liberalization of the North Korean economy?
4. What are the current and required roles of international organizations in order to fix this conflict?
5. What methods can effectively reduce the regulation of North Korean media by the government?
6. Are there any loopholes in past UN resolutions on the issue? How would they be addressed?
7. What is the overall impact of the smuggling of goods and internet services by China and South Korea to North Korea on the world community?
8. How will a unified news channel aid the establishment of a free trade zone?

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Topic II: The Question of Tigray



Summary and History of the Issue

Tigray is an Ethiopian region currently under civil war since November 3, 2020. Ethiopia is separated into 10 main divisions. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) is an Ethiopian political party based in Tigray. Despite the fact that Tigrayans are a minority, the TPLF has maintained a stronghold on the country by leading a coalition of regional parties. As a result, its power was not limited to the area where it was founded. However, the party has gained a reputation for being authoritarian and inefficient over time, culminating in its demise following major protests (UN, n.d.).

The Ethiopian government has invoked national sovereignty to defend and deflect criticism of its actions in Tigray. Observers point out, however, that the government is still obligated by international conflict resolution treaties, which include restrictions on the purposeful targeting of civilians. Although a media blackout has hindered precise reports, there are numerous stories of citizens being bombed, crops and refugee camps being burned, hospitals being looted, and summary executions being carried out. The Ethiopian government has appreciated the United Nations Security Council's efforts to provide humanitarian aid and expand it. Regardless, there are still humanitarian challenges to address. They urged a more comprehensive humanitarian response and unrestricted humanitarian access for all individuals in need, particularly those who are food insecure.

Despite public statements to the contrary, the Ethiopian government and regional authorities continue to isolate Tigray, allowing only the most basic humanitarian aid and staff to enter. The Security Council expressed great concern over allegations of human rights violations and abuses in Tigray, notably sexual assaults against women and girls, and called for those responsible to be investigated and held accountable. The fighting also involves neighboring Eritrea, whose war with Ethiopia from 1998 to 2000 officially ended in 2018 with a much-anticipated peace treaty (Human Rights Watch, 2021).



Topic II: The Question of Tigray

Key Issues

Violence Against Women

This issue is all the more prevalent in regions of conflict, like Tigray. Amnesty International has published a report, titled “Rape and sexual violence in the conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia” that states “given the context, scale, and gravity of the sexual violence committed against women and girls in Tigray, the violations amount to war crimes and may account to crimes against humanity” (Amnesty International, 2021).

The causes of these crimes are many, ranging from insufficient security to negligence from authorities. The perpetrators of these crimes include members of the Eritrean Defense Forces, The Ethiopian National Defense Forces, and the Amhara Regional Police Special Forces. In some cases, the violence is inflicted as a weapon of war, used to terrorize victims for information (Global Citizen, 2021). In others, the violence is perpetrated for no ulterior motive, often onto prisoners. Furthermore, there is a severe lack of medical aid for victims of crimes. Healthcare systems in the region have been overwhelmed due to the war, and Amnesty International highlights that victims of sexual violence are often left without access to care for Sexually-Transmitted-Diseases, pregnancies, Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder, and other physical and psychological injuries. The increasing number of women subjected to horrific sexual violence is concerning, and the fact that they are not provided any support from authorities is depressing.

Food Crisis

The war-torn region of Tigray is in deep crisis as civilians are unable to access sufficient food, which is causing many to die of starvation. According to Vox (2021), 60 percent of Tigray’s population is facing acute food insecurity. The United Nations has warned that this is the world’s worst hunger crisis in a decade. Furthermore, the food crisis in Tigray is a man-made one. Until November of 2020, the Ethiopian and Eritrean forces looted food sources of the Tigray region, leaving the region depleted (NPR, 2021). The Ethiopian Government has since tightly sealed off the Tigray region, which is preventing essential aid and food supply from coming in. Although there are food supplies to suffice in Ethiopia, it is not transported to Tigray. Additionally, the Ethiopian Government has impeded external humanitarian aid that is allowed into the region, including harassment of drivers and long delays for clearance of humanitarian supplies. In fact, it has even issued an order for United Nations officials that are working to manage the crisis to leave the country. The United States has issued a warning of sanctions in response to these conditions, and the United Nations aid chief has also made a statement calling upon the support of the Ethiopian Government in averting and mitigating the effects of this crisis (CNN, 2021).

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Topic II: The Question of Tigray



Displacement & Refugees

The violence caused by the conflict has also led to the internal displacement of approximately 1.7 million people in the Tigray region. In addition to the refugee crisis amongst Tigrayans, the armed conflict has also spread to different areas, including Ethiopia's Amhara in the north and the Afar region in the northeast (United Nations OCHA, 2021). There are approximately 250,000 internally displaced people in the Amhara region, and 112,000 internally displaced people in the Afar region (ReliefWeb, 2021). Without access to adequate shelter, medical care, or food supply and faced with limited options, these civilians undertake dangerous journeys in hope of reaching refuge across the border in Sudan.

The United Nations has already set up camps in support of the Sudanese Government to help the influx of refugees arriving with basic supplies; about 46,000 refugees have been accommodated in these camps. Nearly 1200 of them are unaccompanied minors (United Nations Refugees, 2021). There are still many internally displaced people who don't have access to help and are suffering as a result of low supplies.

Education Crisis

According to Global Citizen (2021), conflict and natural disaster around the world has disrupted the education of 75 million children. The armed conflict in the Tigray region has not spared the education sector. In fact, according to Human Rights Watch (2021), all warring parties (including Ethiopian, Eritrean, and Tigrayan forces) have been found looting and occupying schools. There have been several instances of them using the school facilities as barracks and bases. Additionally, there is looting of school supplies including computers, food, and plasma screens.

Not only has there been looting and occupation of school facilities, but authorities find that after the warring parties leave, there is hate speech written on walls and destruction of classrooms, water pipers, and other properties left in their wake. Approximately 25% of schools have been damaged, teachers are displaced, and there is a shortage of learning materials. In total, approximately 1.4 million children in affected regions have been out of school since March of 2020 (Global Citizen, 2021). The effects of such a gap in the youth education greatly damages the potential of societal advancement and flourishing in future, further increasing the long-standing impact of the war.

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Topic II: The Question of Tigray



Ethnic Tensions

Although the war had started due to Tigrayan refusal to join the Ethiopian Government on their terms, there have been recent concerns the fighting has turned into an ethnic conflict. According to BBC News (2021), Amhara (which is an ethnic group in Ethiopia), has been going door-to-door in search of Tigrayans. When Tigrayan forces make military advances, they too, detain Ethiopian soldiers with poor food and medical supplies. The TPLF has also resumed fighting with Amhara over land. The targeted evictions of even civilians seem to reflect a pattern of ethnic cleansing. Hate speech is left on walls and there are mass murders that further point to a different motivation of war in recent times, which could mean a prolonged and greater danger posed to civilians.

Healthcare Crisis

With the start of the war, almost immediately followed by assaults on hospitals with civilians inside, 73 percent of the health care facilities in Tigray have been intentionally destroyed or looted, according to The Hill (2021). Nurses, medical students, and other health workers have been the target of sexual violence and murder. This targeted brutality has caused many of these workers to leave, which further increases the deficiency in healthcare access to Tigrayans. The impact of this healthcare crisis affects nearly every population demographic in Tigray. Young children are not given vaccinations and are thus left vulnerable to many fatal diseases. Pregnant women are unable to get access to labor and care facilities. Victims of sexual violence, as aforementioned, are not able to obtain care for injuries sustained. Those who are left injured as a result of the armed conflict face difficulty in treating their wounds. Patients with chronic diseases, such as diabetes, are unable to obtain access to life-saving drugs (BBC, 2021). Due to poor and cramped living conditions for the many displaced people in the region, communicable diseases spread rampantly and further exacerbate the crisis (WHO, 2021). Ultimately, hundreds of thousands of people are unable to access urgent health care needs due to intentional destruction of the healthcare system and restricted external aid.

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Topic II: The Question of Tigray



Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Due to the recent nature of this issue, fruitful previous solutions are not available. Solutions that were previously discussed were not implemented well and have not benefited the majority of the population.

Access to Humanitarian Aid

The Ethiopian Government declared a unilateral ceasefire in July, which highlights the possibility of peace. It promised the affected citizens access to humanitarian aid from the United Nations and the re-installation of the basic services, such as power and communication will help in establishing peace. The government also promised unhindered access to human rights and humanitarian workers in Tigray. Medical supplies containing essential medicines, trauma and emergency kits, etc. were flown in by the WHO to Addis Ababa in July (UN News, 2021).

Support for Agriculture

Despite the Government's pledge to support agriculture in the Tigray region, famine and starvation still continue in Tigray.

Allowing UN Humanitarian Flights

Although the Ethiopian government provided access to UN humanitarian flights, fuel shortages have hampered the delivery of emergency assistance and commercial commodities into Tigray, as well as water supply at displacement camps in Mekelle, the regional capital (UN News, 2021).



Topic II: The Question of Tigray

Questions a Resolution Should Address

1. Has your government responded to this crisis? How?
2. What is your country's stance on human rights as a whole?
3. Does your government have relations with Ethiopia, Eritrea, or other neighboring countries? How might those relationships affect their take on the conflict?
4. How assertive should the UN be in attempting to prevent human rights abuses?
5. Should the UN consider sanctions or indictments for war crimes against the Ethiopian government?
6. Should UN Peacekeepers be deployed to provide humanitarian assistance?
7. How does this crisis affect other conflicts in the region?

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