# GECMUN IX

## BACKGROUND GUIDE

United Nations Human Rights Council

*Aiding for Humanitarian Support and Recovery for Post-conflict Regions*

SDG: 16. Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, 17. Partnerships to achieve the Goal

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# Committee Introduction

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is the principal intergovernmental body within the United Nations (UN) system which aims to promote and defend human rights around the world. The role of the council is to examine human rights violations and recommend how they should be addressed. The council has the ability to discuss all thematic human rights issues that require international attention.

The UNHRC was created by the UN General Assembly on 15 March 2006 by resolution 60/251, and its first session took place in June of the same year. The following year, the council adopted an "Institution-building package" to guide and set up its procedures. The Human Rights Council also collaborates with the UN Special Procedures established by the former Commission on Human Rights.

The Human Rights Council meets for at least 10 weeks per year at the United Nations office in Geneva, Switzerland, in March, June, and September. The council is made up of 47 member states who are elected by the UN General Assembly by a simple majority vote. Members of the council are elected for three-year terms with one-third of the members being renewed each year. The council membership is based on the geographical distribution of seats, reflecting the UN's diversity and legitimacy when speaking out on human rights violations around the world

The HRC also has the ability to establish an international commission of inquiries, fact-finding missions, and investigations to respond to fatal violations of International human rights and humanitarian law. They are supported by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) staff who provide administrative, logistical, and security support.

# Agenda Introduction

In places of conflict, millions of innocent victims of wars are fleeing from what has become a region of immense political instability, destabilization, violence, war, and persecution. And with the refugees—also known as internally displaced persons (IDPs)—increasing steeply in recent years, 89.3 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced, according to the UN. Our committee defines post conflict regions as any regions in war/civil war and calls to attention those in the Middle East, including but not limited to Afghanistan, Iraq, Israel, Syria, and Yemen.

As our committee strives to address a broad global issue regarding human rights in post-conflict Middle East, the aim of our committee's agenda, consequently, is not to set specific policies representing the needs and priorities of individual countries, but to establish broadly applicable principles that may guide institutions and policies in the region; our agenda mainly concerns of ways to provide aid in both short-term (such as humanitarian aid) and long-term (such as initiatives on energy supply) for full recovery and reconstruction.

Endeavoring to meet the pressing social needs and building durable peace in the Middle East, the international community can play a crucial part in assisting the regions of conflict to avoid repeating their history of conflicts. With the combined efforts of delegates, solutions to this agenda may have a substantial impact on the future of the Middle East.

# Letter from the Chairs

Dear Esteemed Delegates,

Welcome to GECMUN IX! We are GhaBin Kim, ChanHee (Harry) Jung, and HyeSun (Alyssa) Choi from St. Johnsbury Academy Jeju. It is our great pleasure to be serving as your chair for the UNHRC. Throughout the conference, we will be helping delegates engage in active debates regarding the issues of humanitarian support for post-conflict regions.

In order to yield the best possible debate and resolution, the chairs expect each delegate to come to the conference with an understanding of the country's position and a willingness to formulate effective resolutions. This background guide is meant to be the starting point of your preparation for the conference. As you work to understand your country's position, allow this guide to set up the foundation for your research. The chairs highly recommend delegates to also conduct independent research, making efficient use of both online and offline resources.

As students who started their Model United Nations careers in middle school, we understand that this committee might be challenging for some students. However, we encourage you to take initiative and steer the discussion throughout the conference. MUN provides great opportunities for you to improve not only your academic skills but also the ability to analyze social issues from diverse perspectives, and we hope you find this aspect of MUN intriguing as well.

We will try our best to support you and effectively moderate the debate. Please feel free to contact any of the chairs during your preparation for the conference, and we hope to see all of you soon.

Sincerely,
UNHRC chairs
GhaBin Kim (s17010324@sjajeju.kr)
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# Key Terms

**Humanitarian Aid**

Humanitarian assistance is intended to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and after man-made crises and disasters caused by natural hazards, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for when such situations occur.

**Refugee**

People who have fled war, violence, conflict, or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country.

**Post-Conflict Reconstruction**

Construction aims at the consolidation of peace and security and the attainment of sustainable socio-economic development in a war-shattered country.

**1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol**

The key legal documents that form the basis of humanitarian aid for refugees. With 149 State parties to either or both, they define the term 'refugee' and outlines the rights of refugees, as well as the legal obligations of States to protect them.

**International Refugee Law (IRL)**

Set of treaties which aim to give refugees legal humanitarian protections. The 1951 convention and 1967 Protocol are the two most important components in the present day.

**International humanitarian Law (IHL)**

A subset of International Law, which focuses on minimizing the harm done by armed conflict.

# Historical Background

*\*\*Due to the nature of our agenda, coverage of historical background for all Middle East conflicts is not provided (especially historical context for the 20th century). Please serve this background as a starter for independent research. Just as a sidenote, knowing essential and basic background knowledge and historical trends on Middle East, such as Israel-Palestine conflict, Sunni-Shia split, proxy wars, and terrorist movements, will be some of the necessary context for delegates to maintain high-quality debates.\*\**

### *ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT*

**2000, July:** The Camp David summit is held between Ehud Barak, Israel's prime minister, Yasser Arafat, leader of the Palestinian Authority, and the U.S. President Bill Clinton. Aimed at reaching a "final status" agreement on topics such as territory, refugees and Palestinian right of return, and settlements, the talks break down after two weeks, with the US and the Israelis blaming Arafat for refusing to accept a proposal drafted by their negotiators.

**2001, January:** Summit between Israel and Palestinian Authority is held at Egyptian resort of Taba. Differences remained between Israel and the Palestinians despite the discussions on territorial and settlements issues.

**2001, June 1:** A Hamas suicide bomber attacks an Israeli nightclub. Twenty-one Israelis, mostly teenagers, were killed, and more than 100 were injured.

**2002:** Israel begins construction of separation barrier between the West Bank and Israel, but for some of its length it serves to annex large areas of Palestinian land.

**2002, March 27, 28:** Beirut summit between heads of Arab nations to discuss plans to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Arab leaders collectively offer Israel peace, recognition and normal relations in return for Israel's withdrawal from Arab lands captured since 1967, the restoration of a Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital and a "fair solution" for the 3.8 million Palestinian refugees.

**2006, June 25:** Palestinians cross the border from the Gaza Strip and capture Corporal Gilad Shalit, killing two Israeli soldiers and wounding four others. And the struggle continues between Israeli and Palestinians.

### *IRAQ*

**2001, September 11:** Members of al-Qaeda attack sites in the U.S., including the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

**2003-2011:** U.S. Invasion of Iraq. The Iraq War begins under President George W. Bush's administration's War on Terror following the September 11 attacks. U.S. troops were deployed to overthrow the Iraqi government of Saddam Hussein, and there was significant collateral damage.

**2013-2017:** War in Iraq

> **2014:** ISIS rises in Iraq and Syria; rival groups try to overthrow the Syrian president.

> **2017:** ISIS is defeated in Raqqa and Mosul, and all control of territories in Syria and Iraq cease by 2019

## SYRIA

*2011 onwards:*

> *2011*: Arab Spring, a series of anti-government protests, proliferates. The involvement of many regional powers to either support the Syrian opposition or the ruling Ba'ath party aggravated the conflicts

> *2011 March:* Syrian Civil War breaks out as a part of wider Arab Spring protests.

*2014:* ISIS rises in Iraq and Syria; rival groups try to overthrow the Syrian president

*2017:* ISIS is defeated in Raqqa and Mosul, and all control of territories in Syria and Iraq cease by 2019

## YEMEN

*2004 to present:* Shia insurgency in Yemen; a representative instance of yet another Shia Sunni conflict, Shia insurgency in Yemen was a military rebellion (though the movement also includes Sunni) against the Yemeni military that began in Northern Yemen and has since escalated into a full-scale civil war. This resulted in the displacement of approximately 250,000 Yemenis ("Yemeni Military Battles Shi'ite Rebels").

*2011 to present:* Yemen Crisis; began as a revolution against President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who led Yemen for more than 3 decades.

# Current State of Affairs

Amid the ongoing conflicts and chaos in the Middle East, one of the most important catalysts for the aggravated conflict can be attributed to the the advent of Covid-19 pandemic. Consequently, local civilians, compounded with the damage of wars, confronted greater damage.

In Syria, the prolonged ten-year Syrian conflict, which has killed more than 350,000 people according to the UN, continued. In response, several times throughout the year, Mr. Pedersen—the UN Special Envoy for the country—provided "his realistic assessment of the humanitarian and security situation in the country, characterized by what he called a "gulf of mistrust" between warring parties, and frequent attacks on civilians" ("'Big Disappointment' over Lack of Syria Constitution Agreement"). However, for now, his efforts to establish a new constitution in Syria have been unsuccessful.

"Unrest in Palestine and Israel escalated in May, with at least 60 youngsters killed in the occupied Palestinian enclave of Gaza and another 444 injured over a fraught 10-day period.  After 11 days of rocket and air attacks, a ceasefire was reached between Israel and Palestinian militant group Hamas, by which time some 240 were reportedly killed, and thousands injured, the majority in Gaza." At its sixty-first session, the General Assembly reiterated its determination that any actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Holy City of Jerusalem were illegal and therefore null and void, and called upon Israel to cease all such illegal ad unilateral measures. At the same session, the General Assembly declared that Israel had failed so far to comply with Security Council resolution 497 (1981)).

In Yemen, civilians were faced with the "highest levels of malnutrition since the beginning of the conflict in 2015, with over half the population facing severe food shortages", according to the UN. UN food relief agency chief David Beasley also warned in March that millions were "knocking on the door of famine". Not to mention that as the UN confirmed that the country remained "the world's worst humanitarian crisis."

As demonstrated above, despite much of the UN's efforts, inefficiency in resolving conflicts and assisting in reconstruction still persists. However, our committee hopes to identify common problems in conflicts and find initiatives to address the most imminent issues while endeavoring to establish the architecture for long-term peace and aid for the Middle East.

# Stances of Parties

**Afghanistan**

Afghans make up one of the largest refugee populations worldwide. There are 2.6 million registered Afghan refugees in the world. Facing an ongoing humanitarian crisis, the resilience of refugees, internally displaced people, and host communities is slowly reaching its limit.

**Canada**

The Canadian refugee system has two main parts: the Refugee and Humanitarian Resettlement Program, for people who need protection from outside Canada and the In-Canada Asylum Program for people making refugee protection claims from within Canada.

**China**

About 1,160 persons of concern are registered with UNHCR in China, including around 340 refugees predominantly from Somalia, Syria, Afghanistan, and Yemen. There are 303,106 Indo-Chinese refugees de facto integrated pending Government regularization. UNHRC China focuses on protection needs as well as raising awareness and mobilizing support for the organization's global efforts to protect people forced to flee.

**Egypt**

Refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt rely heavily on humanitarian assistance. They often reside in overcrowded neighborhoods, where the host community struggles with substandard living conditions and high unemployment rates. Refugees from African countries also face linguistic barriers, harassment, and discrimination. This further limits their access to formal education and contributes to their marginalization.

**Ethiopia**

A full-scale humanitarian and protection crisis has been unfolding in and around Ethiopia's Tigray, Amhara, and Afar regions since armed conflict broke out in early November 2020. the ongoing conflict, which made headlines for widespread human rights violations, including sexual violence, thousands have been forced to cross the border to Sudan and has led to a further 2.5 million people being displaced within the country in 2021.

**France**

As of December 31, 2020, there were 455,295 refugees and persons under other forms of international protection in France, according to the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA). The main countries of origin are Afghanistan, Syria, Sri Lanka, Russia, and DRC. UNHCR France raises awareness of situations of forced displacement globally and the need for increased solidarity in line with the Global Compact on Refugees.

**Germany**

In the middle of 2021, Germany reported almost 1.24 million refugees and 233 000 asylum seekers, making it the biggest host country for refugees in Europe. Half of the refugees are from Syria. Germany also hosts 27 000 stateless persons. At the same time, Germany supports the worldwide work of UNHCR: for years, the country has been the second biggest bilateral donor after the US.

**India**

Refugees and asylum-seekers in India primarily live in urban settings alongside host communities. 46% of the refugees are women and girls, and 36% are children. India has been hosting varied refugee groups for decades and has found solutions for many forcibly displaced persons. UNHCR India focuses on protection needs and conducts registration and RSD, promoting solutions and self-reliance.

**Iran**

The Islamic Republic of Iran is host to one of the largest and most protracted refugee situations in the world, having provided asylum to refugees for over forty years. 800,000 refugees currently live in Iran, 20,000 of which are Iraqis and 780,000 are Afghans. There are also 2.6 million undocumented Afghans and 600,000 Afghan passport holders. While the needs of refugees continue to increase, opportunities for durable solutions, including voluntary repatriation and resettlement, remain limited.

**Japan**

Japan is a State party to the 1951 Refugee Convention. In 2021, the country was the 4th largest government donor (USD 140 Million), and the 3rd largest global private-sector contributor (USD 61 Million) to UNHCR responding to needs worldwide. UNHCR Japan continues to build strong partnerships with the national government, parliamentarians, civil society, academia, media, corporate sector, and municipalities to promote awareness of refugee issues and statelessness and gain public support for UNHCR's activities worldwide and within Japan.

**Mexico**

The North of Central America suffers from violence as a result of gangs and other organized crime. This is the main driver of forced displacement in the region. While it continues to improve financial support, legal aid, and safe housing for asylum seekers, the long-term stability of refugees remains a concern.

**Pakistan**

Pakistan hosts more than 1.4 million registered Afghans who have been forced to flee their homes. In 2018, UNHCR's work in Pakistan includes working with the authorities to give refugees access to health and education services, strengthening social cohesion between

refugees and their host communities, and helping refugees who decide voluntarily to return home.

**Russian Federation**

Most people of concern were coming from Ukraine, Afghanistan, and Syria. The primary goal of the UN is to support and complement the efforts of the Russian government to develop a fair and effective asylum system under international standards and prevent and reduce the incidence of statelessness.

**Saudi Arabia**

Saudi Arabia is not a party to the main global refugee protection instrument, the 1951 Refugee Convention, nor does it have any specific domestic legal framework pertaining to refugee issues. Thirty-five percent of Saudi Arabia's roughly 30 million inhabitants are not citizens – and many come from important refugee-producing countries.

**South Korea**

As of 31 December 2021, 3,575 people have been recognized as refugees or granted humanitarian status by the South Korean government. The majority of people holding humanitarian status are from Syria and Yemen. The Republic of Korea acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol in 1992 and began registering asylum-seekers in 1994, with the first recognition of refugee status in 2001. The Refugee Act and its Presidential Decree and Enforcement Regulation came into effect on 1 July 2013.

**Spain**

At the end of 2021, Spain had registered around 64,500 new asylum applications. As in previous years, the top nationalities were asylum-seekers from Latin American countries such as Venezuela and Colombia, although it also registered applications from Moroccan, Malian, and Senegalese persons. Spain has been a signatory of the 1951 Geneva Convention and its Protocol since 1978 and counts on national asylum legislation (law 12/2009).

**Thailand**

The Royal Thailand Government (RTG), together with international agencies and non-governmental organizations, as well as other governments and private donors, have a long tradition of working together to address the protection, assistance, and durable solutions needs of successive influxes of refugees from Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar and beyond.

**Turkey**

Turkey currently hosts the largest refugee population in the world with more than 4 million people. Some 3.7 million of them are Syrians who fled the ongoing conflict that has been ravaging their country for over 11 years. The cost of living and lack of access to a regular income makes it difficult for vulnerable families to meet their basic needs. Some feel they have

no choice but to resort to negative coping mechanisms such as child labor, street begging, or early marriage.

## Uganda

Over 80% of refugees are hosted in 13 districts in the North and South-Western regions and in the capital Kampala. They live in villages known as settlements, where they co-exist with communities that host them. This approach, combined with progressive refugee laws and freedoms, provide refugees in Uganda with significant prospects for dignity and self-reliance. In coordination with the government, UNHCR and partners continue to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to refugees in Uganda and support efforts towards a comprehensive refugee response.

## United Kingdom

In the UK, UNHCR provides guidance on refugee and asylum law and policy to the UK government, legal practitioners, non-governmental organizations, and many others. Where appropriate UNHCR takes up cases and raises issues of concern with our counterparts in the UK government.UNHCR recognizes the important role played by UK courts in the development of international refugee law. UNHCR believes that its intervention in national courts is a powerful means of asserting a position on refugee protection and contributing to the development of international refugee law.

## United States of America

Most refugees who enter the U.S. refugee admissions program are identified and referred for resettlement in the U.S. by the U.N. refugee agency (UNHCR), a U.S. embassy or an approved humanitarian aid organization. The U.S. is just one of 29 resettlement countries. Out of the more than 26 million refugees in the world, less than one percent are considered for resettlement worldwide. The U.S. accepts a limited number of refugees each year. The president in consultation with Congress determines the authorized target for refugee admissions through a Presidential Determination.

# Possible Solutions

**Humanitarian Intervention**

Humanitarian intervention is the use of military force across borders to halt severe and widespread human rights violations in a state that has not granted authority for the use of force. Humanitarian interventions are only intended to ease the most severe types of suffering. Currently, even though most people believe that humanitarian interventions should be undertaken on a global basis, the uncertainty remains over which agents should act in response to a mass violation of human rights.

Nonetheless, the major and most important benefit of humanitarian intervention is that they protect innocent civilians under the successful use of military force.  Also, it allows war criminals and human rights abuses to be held to account. There have been cases where humanitarian interventions have effectively held war criminals and human rights violators accountable; NATO intervention in Bosnia is one of the most known examples.

**Aid Efforts**

Humanitarian aid, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs(OCHA), is a series of actions to protect, support, and defend citizens who are affected by a disaster that threatens their lives and means of survival. Thus, aid efforts are meant to protect human life, alleviate suffering, preserve respectable conditions, and finally ensure access to basic needs such as water, food, medical care, and shelter. Adding on, this help must also preserve basic rights by defending the rights, condemning, applying political pressure, and offering assistance.

**Disaster Resilience**

A humanitarian crisis is considered to be an event that threatens the health, safety, or well-being of a large group of people. This may happen mainly in war, but also in disaster. Ultimately, technologies cannot prevent us from major natural disasters, but they may help to mitigate their effects; early warning systems have significantly decreased mortality throughout the world.

The disaster relief services business was on display at the United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WSDRR) with nations such as antiseismic flooring for use in hospital operating rooms and improvements in removing and transporting injured disaster victims. Furthermore, UNICEF and Psychic Factory have built bricks that can be used to convey basic necessities such as food and water to disaster victims.

# Questions to Consider

1. What initiatives can be taken to help refugees to reunite with their families and reintegrate into society?
2. How can the committee ensure that countries within the conflict region participate in the treaty?
3. What is the most effective way of implementing the short-term solution for teh conflict region?

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