



Edify Model United Nations-2023



Background Guide

United Nations Human Rights Council

UNHRC

Agenda: *Status of human rights of people in conflict
and post crisis countries*

Letter from the Executive Board

Your excellencies,

I am delighted to welcome you to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) at Edify Model United Nations 2023 (EdiMUN-2023). The United Nations Human Rights Council, established in 2006, which is responsible to enhance the advocacy and safeguarding of human rights worldwide, dealing with instances of human rights abuses and providing recommendations on how to address them. It possesses the capacity to engage in discussions on various human rights topics and address ongoing human rights concerns throughout the year.

The Executive Board of this council expects representatives to speak not just with knowledge, but also with diplomacy, zeal, and decorum. The Executive Board's only responsibility is to monitor and moderate the committee, while it is up to the delegates to keep the debate lively and energetic. This can only happen if every member of the committee is well-read and understands the nuances of the agenda we will be addressing. To that end, this background information is intended to help you get started with your study. Keep in mind that this is not the conclusion of your research, but rather the beginning. This guide gives an overview of subtopics related to our agenda, as well as some guiding questions that delegates should consider answering in their resolutions. This guide also includes connections to websites that can help you conduct thorough studies and have a better understanding of the agenda. We look forward to seeing you at the conference.

With Regards,

Vaibhav Ponnappalli,

Chairperson

Shriya Gupta Bandaru

Vice Chairperson

United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

The **United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)** is a pivotal body within the United Nations system dedicated to the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide. Established in March 2006, the UNHRC replaced the previous Commission on Human Rights, with the aim of addressing human rights issues more effectively and ensuring a more balanced and responsive approach. It consists of 47 member states elected by the United Nations General Assembly, serving three-year terms with the goal of enhancing the international community's commitment to human rights.

The UNHRC conducts its work through regular sessions held in Geneva, Switzerland, throughout the year. One of its distinctive features is the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), a process in which each member state's human rights record is examined by its peers, promoting transparency and accountability. The UNHRC also utilizes special procedures, including special rapporteurs and independent experts, to investigate and report on specific human rights concerns worldwide. Additionally, the council can establish commissions of inquiry or fact-finding missions to investigate severe human rights violations in specific regions or countries.

The UNHRC's multifaceted responsibilities encompass a wide array of human rights issues, including civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. It plays a crucial role in addressing ongoing human rights violations, promoting dialogue and cooperation among member states, and advancing the global human rights agenda. However, like any international body, it faces challenges, including allegations of politicization and selectivity. Nevertheless, the UNHRC remains an essential forum for the international community to engage in constructive dialogue, advocate for human rights, and work towards a world where the dignity, equality, and justice of all individuals are upheld and protected.

In conclusion, the United Nations Human Rights Council stands as a vital institution committed to the universal promotion and protection of human rights. Through its mechanisms, it strives to address the diverse and complex challenges facing human rights worldwide, bringing together member states, civil society, and international experts in a collaborative effort. While it encounters criticisms and challenges, the UNHRC remains instrumental in holding governments accountable for human rights violations, fostering dialogue, and advocating for the fundamental principles of dignity, equality, and justice. As the international community continues to grapple with evolving human rights issues, the UNHRC plays a central role in the ongoing quest for a more just and rights-respecting world for all.

Agenda

Status of human rights of people in conflict and post crisis countries

Understanding Human Rights: -

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to all people. They are universal, meaning they apply to everyone, regardless of their race, religion, gender, or other characteristics. Human rights are also inalienable, meaning they cannot be taken away. They are also indivisible, meaning they are all important and cannot be separated from each other. Human rights are protected by international law and are the foundation for dignity, equality, and justice for all people.

These rights are inalienable, meaning they cannot be taken away or surrendered under any circumstances. No government, institution, or individual has the authority to strip someone of their human rights. They are an integral part of human existence, rooted in the inherent dignity of every person.

Furthermore, human rights are indivisible, meaning they are interconnected and interdependent. One cannot be fully realized without the others. For example, the right to education supports the right to work, which in turn promotes economic security, contributing to an adequate standard of living. These rights complement and reinforce one another, forming a comprehensive framework that ensures the well-being of individuals and society as a whole.

Human rights are not merely aspirational ideals; they are legally protected by international treaties, conventions, and agreements. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, serves as a foundational document that outlines the basic principles of human rights. Additionally, various international human rights conventions, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, provide a legal framework for the protection and promotion of specific rights.

Introduction to Conflict and Post- Crisis Countries: -

Conflict and post-crisis countries refer to nations that have experienced significant periods of political, social, or armed conflict, often resulting in instability, violence, and humanitarian crises. These countries face unique challenges and complexities in their efforts to rebuild and recover. Here is an introduction to the key concepts related to conflict and post-crisis countries:

Conflict: Conflict refers to a state of discord or disagreement between individuals, groups, communities, or nations. It can manifest in various forms, such as political disputes, social unrest, ethnic or religious tensions, or armed warfare.

Armed Conflict: Armed conflict involves the use of armed forces or organized armed groups to pursue political, social, or territorial goals. It can range from low-intensity conflicts, such as insurgencies, to full-scale wars.

Post-Crisis: The term "post-crisis" denotes the period following a major conflict, crisis, or disaster. It is a phase characterized by efforts to stabilize, rebuild, and recover the affected area or country.

Characteristics of Conflict and Post-Crisis Countries:

Instability: Conflict and post-crisis countries often experience political instability, making it challenging to establish effective governance.

Displacement: Conflict can lead to the displacement of large populations, resulting in internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees.

Humanitarian Crisis: Conflict can cause severe humanitarian crises, including food shortages, lack of healthcare, and violations of human rights.

Infrastructure Damage: Infrastructure such as roads, schools, hospitals, and utilities may be destroyed or severely damaged during conflicts.

Economic Challenges: Conflict disrupts economic activities, hindering development and causing economic hardships for the population.

Social Divisions: Ethnic, religious, or social divisions may be exacerbated by conflict, creating long-lasting tensions.

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) has identified various impacts of conflict and crisis on human rights through its reports, resolutions, and work on the ground. Some of the key impacts include:

- **Violations of the Right to Life:** Conflict and crisis situations often lead to widespread loss of life, including civilian casualties, extrajudicial killings, and targeted violence against specific groups or individuals.
- **Violations of the Right to Physical Integrity:** Individuals may face torture, sexual violence, forced labor, and other forms of physical harm and abuse during conflict, leading to severe violations of their right to physical integrity.
- **Displacement:** Conflict-induced displacement, both internally and across borders, can result in violations of the right to housing, security, and adequate living conditions for displaced populations.
- **Violations of Freedom of Expression:** Restrictions on freedom of expression, censorship, and attacks on journalists and media outlets can limit the flow of information and hinder the right to freedom of expression.
- **Humanitarian Access:** Conflict can impede the delivery of humanitarian aid, affecting the right to receive assistance, especially for vulnerable populations, and placing aid workers at risk.
- **Disruption of Education:** Conflict disrupts children's right to education as schools may be damaged, occupied, or closed. The displacement of families can also hinder access to education.
- **Discrimination and Marginalization:** Conflict can exacerbate discrimination and marginalization based on ethnicity, religion, nationality, or other factors, violating principles of equality and non-discrimination.
- **Child Rights Violations:** Children are particularly vulnerable during conflicts, facing violations such as recruitment as child soldiers, sexual violence, and family separation.
- **Destruction of Cultural Heritage:** Cultural heritage sites, including monuments, religious buildings, and artifacts, may be targeted or damaged during conflicts, leading to the loss of cultural heritage and the violation of cultural rights.

International Legal Instruments and Agreements: -

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is responsible for promoting and protecting human rights worldwide. It relies on a range of international legal instruments and agreements to guide its work and hold states accountable for human rights violations.

- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):** Although not a legally binding treaty, the UDHR is a foundational document that sets out fundamental human rights principles. The UNHRC frequently refers to it as a guidepost for human rights standards.
- **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR):** This treaty outlines civil and political rights, including the right to life, freedom of speech, and the right to a fair trial. The UNHRC is responsible for monitoring compliance with the ICCPR by its state parties.
- **International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR):** The ICESCR addresses economic, social, and cultural rights such as the right to education, health, and work. The UNHRC oversees the implementation of the ICESCR by state parties.
- **Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT):** CAT prohibits torture and other cruel treatment and obligates states to take measures to prevent torture. The UNHRC reviews state parties' reports on their compliance with CAT.
- **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC):** CRC outlines the rights of children, including the right to education, health, and protection from exploitation. The UNHRC monitors and reports on the implementation of the CRC.
- **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD):** ICERD addresses racial discrimination and requires state parties to take measures to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms. The UNHRC oversees the implementation of ICERD.
- **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD):** CRPD promotes the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities. The UNHRC monitors the implementation of this convention.
- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW):** CEDAW addresses gender-based discrimination and requires state parties to take measures to eliminate discrimination against women. The UNHRC reviews state parties' reports on their compliance with CEDAW.
- **International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED):** ICPPED addresses the crime of enforced disappearance and requires states to prevent and punish it. The UNHRC oversees the implementation of this convention.

The UNHRC works closely with these legal instruments and agreements to assess the human rights situation in different countries, conduct reviews, and make recommendations for improving human rights practices. It also plays a role in ensuring that states adhere to their international obligations under these treaties.

The ongoing struggle for human rights in conflict and post-crisis contexts is marked by complexity and challenges. In these environments, characterized by violence and governance breakdowns, protecting, and promoting human rights becomes an urgent imperative. Efforts encompass the protection of civilians, accountability for human rights violations, the delivery of humanitarian aid, and integrating human rights into peace processes. Vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and minorities, require special attention, and human rights monitoring is essential for documenting violations and holding perpetrators accountable. Transitional justice, security sector reform, and reconstruction efforts are critical for long-term stability, while international organizations, civil society, and advocacy play pivotal roles. Promoting human rights education and addressing root causes are vital elements in the ongoing quest to prevent future conflicts and crises, ultimately aiming for a more just and peaceful world.

Questions to consider

- What are the roles and responsibilities of governments, non-state actors, and international organizations in safeguarding human rights during conflicts and in post-crisis settings?
- How can countries strike a balance between combating terrorism and protecting human rights, particularly in conflict areas where terrorism is prevalent?
- Analyse the relationship between economic recovery and the protection of human rights in post-crisis countries. How can economic development support human rights?
- Discuss the impact of armed conflict on children's rights, including access to education, healthcare, and protection from recruitment as child soldiers.

Note:

The above are some of the important topics to be deeply discussed in the sessions. However, the discussion will not be limited to them, and the delegates need to do further study in order for the committee to reach a satisfactory draft resolution.

Delegates, this background guide is just a resource for understanding the agenda and its key concepts. We expect you to understand the nuances of the agendas and arrive at the conference prepared.