

UNHRC

BACKGROUND GUIDE



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

We feel privileged and honoured to welcome all of you to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), EMUN 2022. We are extremely excited to be working with you. This MUN aims to give you a better and a more thorough insight into the working and functioning of UNHRC. We have designed a Background Guide to help you start with your research process. The Background Guide is important, but it should not be a hindrance in your external research. The Background Guide will provide you with the guiding topics for your external research and background research on your country.

We urge all members of the committee to take time out to read the background guide and to use it as a starting point for their research. We urge every delegate to come to the conference with an open mind, ready to meet and work with new people, and to actively participate in the debate in the committee. Debating and discussing problems and solutions will help in making the resolution more thorough and effective. The Executive Board will not interfere in the flow of debate unless absolutely required. Therefore, the onus is on us, to ensure that the committee does not impose lies onto the delegates.

We strongly believe that with good research, the delegates will be able to steer the committee in the right direction. We are hoping to have a lot of enthusiastic delegates debating their socks off. We are looking forward to seeing some relevant solutions being discussed in the committee, and to having a lot of fun! We would also like to remind all of you to remain disciplined throughout the conference and to always follow the Rules of Procedure and adhere to foreign policies. We promise to make this a memorable and entertaining experience for each one of you.

Crises situations often give rise to human rights violations across the world. Therefore it is the human rights council's responsibility to discuss apt solutions and most importantly you as delegates are the catalysts of change for the same.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with the Executive Board at any time prior to or during the conference, if you have any queries regarding the agenda or the rules of procedure. We are always ready to help you with anything you need. We request the delegates to not view this conference as a zero-sum game. Model UN conferences are more collaborative than competitive, and we would like to keep this spirit alive during all our committee sessions. Again, we cannot wait to work with all of you and we hope that this experience proves to be an educational, enriching, and enjoyable one. Strive to do your best, to be punctual, and most importantly, to have fun!

Warm Regards,

Mr. Sivarama Skanda (CHAIRPERSON)

Mihir Eshan PS (VICE-CHAIRPERSON)



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (UNHRC)

The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe and for addressing situations of human rights violations and make recommendations on them. It has the ability to discuss all thematic human rights issues and situations that require its attention throughout the year. It meets at the UN Office at Geneva.

The Council is made up of 47 United Nations Member States which are elected by the UN General Assembly. The Human Rights Council replaced the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights.



MANDATE AND WORKING:

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN Human Rights) is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote and protect the enjoyment and full realization, by all people, of all human rights. The Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and international human rights laws and treaties established those rights.

UN Human Rights was created by the General Assembly in 1993 through its resolution 48/141 which also details its mandate.

1. Promote and protect all human rights for all
2. Recommend that bodies of the UN system improve the promotion and protection of all human rights
3. Promote and protect the right to development
4. Provide technical assistance to States for human rights activities
5. Coordinate UN human rights education and public information programmes
6. Work actively to remove obstacles to the realization of human rights and to prevent the continuation of human rights violations
7. Engage in dialogue with Governments in order to secure respect for all human rights
8. Enhance international cooperation for the promotion and protection of all human rights
9. Coordinate human rights promotion and protection activities throughout the United Nations system
10. Rationalize, adapt, strengthen, and streamline the UN human rights machinery.



AGENDA

Discussing the situation in Afghanistan and Iran with emphasis on rights of minorities



UNHRC AND THE AFGHANISTAN CRISIS-

The human rights situation in Afghanistan continues to deteriorate with emerging reports and information continuously confirming significant rights reversals. In a statement delivered to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) on 13 September 2021, Michele Bachelet, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, noted that the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) has received credible reports of human rights violations, including reprisal killings of former members of the Afghan security forces, as well as arbitrarily detentions of former government officials. The High Commissioner added that women have been progressively excluded from the public sphere and that the Taliban has limited Afghan girls' access to education. On 7 October 2021, the UNHRC adopted a resolution to create a Special Rapporteur on Afghanistan.

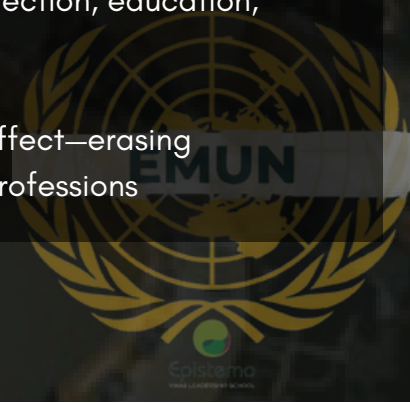
The de facto forces regularly conduct house-to-house searches in residential areas, often accompanied by abuses and violence, targeting neighbourhoods. Places of worship and educational and medical centres of religious minorities have been systematically attacked and their members have been arbitrarily arrested, tortured, summarily executed, evicted, marginalized and, in some cases, forced to flee the country.

The United Nations Human Rights Council works hard to fulfil its duty to suggest reforms in regions of crisis and protect the rights of the common people. However, not much can be done without cooperation from local governments. Here comes the need for international dialogue about conflict regions.

WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN-

When the Taliban seized power in August, their initial statements included assurances that women would be allowed to exercise their rights within Islamic Law, including their right to study and work. However, despite these verbal commitments, women and girls are seeing a rapid reversal of their rights. Women across the country report instances everyday of increased levels of restrictive gender norms and practices, impacting on freedom of movement and expression, access to life-saving services, information, protection, education, employment and livelihood opportunities.

The absence of women from the media landscape risks having a chilling effect—erasing women from the public eye and normalizing male dominance in specific professions



The de facto authorities have reaffirmed the previous Government's criminalization of same-sex relations, regarding them as being against sharia law.

CONDITION OF HEALTHCARE-

The freezing of international aid has had a tremendous impact on the ability to run health services, let alone specialized services for women and girls. Health staff have also not received wages for several months and availability of medical supplies is declining rapidly because of the broader economic situation. The challenge facing the health sector is compounded by a major brain drain.

Access to health services is a concerning part of the humanitarian crisis. Women with more complex health needs, such as pregnant women, have reportedly been facing major access issues. Challenges cited include fear and insecurity, mobility restrictions (use of mahram), long distances to reach health services, lack of safe transportation for women (e.g., the need to use a private car rather than public transportation), and lack of trained female staff.

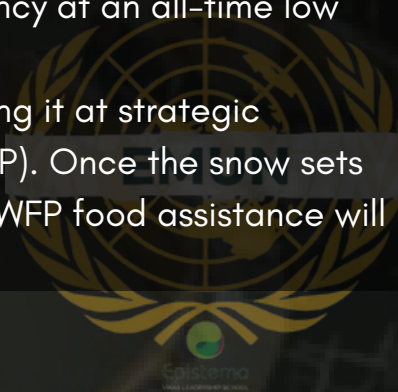
FOOD AND NUTRITION-

The World Food Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations warn that by November 2022, 18.9 million people – nearly half the population – are estimated to face acute levels of food insecurity. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates that 4.7 million people will suffer from acute malnutrition due to food insecurity in 2022, an increase of 21 per cent from 2021.

A humanitarian crisis of incredible proportions has grown even more complex and severe since the Taliban took control. Job losses, lack of cash and soaring prices are creating a new class of hungry in Afghanistan. 18.9 million Afghans are not consuming enough food.

The country is on the brink of economic collapse, with the local currency at an all-time low and food price on the rise.

As winter approaches, getting food into the country and prepositioning it at strategic locations is now the most urgent task for World Food Programme (WFP). Once the snow sets in, roads will be cut off and communities stranded. This lean season, WFP food assistance will be the only lifeline for many Afghan families.



EDUCATION-

In 27 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, girls are systematically barred from grades 7 to 12.²⁰ Young women are also facing challenges accessing university-level education. While girls are now reportedly attending secondary schools in some provinces, there is no central or country-wide policy and/or decision guaranteeing equal access to education at all levels for girls and boys. The de facto authorities have indicated they are working on a nation-wide policy so that girls can access all levels of education across the country.

In some parts of the country, a shortage of schools and insufficient transportation are the main obstacles to education – a long walk to school means fewer children go. Geographical barriers, especially in mountainous areas, also make it hard for children to reach the classroom. Once children do make it, they often receive a lower quality of education because only 48 per cent of their teachers have the minimum academic qualifications (equivalent to an Associate Degree).

The socio-political and humanitarian crises that Afghanistan faces critically affect a fragile education system. Natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, and landslides exacerbate the situation for all children. These factors raise parental concerns about safety and can prevent them from sending their children to school.



The Situation in Iran : Protests and Violence

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) said that more than 300 people had been killed so far, including more than 40 children. These deaths occurred across the country, with deaths reported in 25 of 31 provinces.

Tehran has blamed foreign enemies and their agents for orchestrating the protests, which have turned into a popular revolt by Iranians from all layers of society, posing one of the boldest challenges to the clerical rulers since the 1979 revolution. Syrian Civil War (2011-present):

A proposal to be discussed at the session seeks to establish a fact-finding mission on the crackdown in Iran. Any evidence of abuses such a body might find could later be used before national and international courts; a U.N. document showed.

Special Procedures mandate holders have repeatedly raised concerns about the unlawful and excessive use of force by law enforcement against protesters and the systemic impunity for perpetrators of human rights violations. Thematic pillars–

Accountability: Strengthening rule of law and accountability for human rights violations.

Peace and Security: Early warning, prevention & protection of human rights in situations of conflict & insecurity.

Participation: Enhancing & protecting civic space and people's participation.

Shifts–

Prevention

People on the move

Civic space

Spotlight populations–

Women

Persons with disabilities



DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY UNHRC ON THE AFGHANISTAN CRISIS

As Afghanistan continues to slip into a devastating economic and humanitarian crisis, there is one global actor that can help the country pull through: the United Nations. While its member states continue to debate whether to recognise the Taliban's government, the UN can still play a significant role in supporting the Afghan people. In fact, as an international institution, it often takes on the responsibilities that no single nation wants to bear.

It is important to recognise that there remains as much need for a political settlement in Afghanistan today as there was before the Taliban took over Kabul. Rather than write off the Afghan peace process as dead in the water, it is more constructive to view it as a multi-year, adaptive and ongoing process of bringing all sides together to build bridges and reach a common understanding of the future of Afghanistan.

Given this imperative to reach a durable peace in Afghanistan, the UN must ensure that humanitarian and development responses support rather than detract from the peace process. In so doing, the humanitarian-development-peace nexus offers a powerful framework for advancing more integrated approaches that break down the traditional siloes of the international aid system in responding to the Afghan crisis.



POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE AGENDA-

The only real and feasible solution to this crisis is for the Taliban to abide by all international human rights and humanitarian law obligations and commitments incumbent upon Afghanistan, fully implement the human rights standards that Afghanistan has freely accepted, including respecting the rights of girls and women to education, employment, and participation in public life, upholding the rights of persons belonging to minority communities, and constructively engaging with human rights mechanisms.

Iran must recognise freedom of expression and speech to be of paramount importance for Iranian women and other minorities to live lives of peace and prosperity. They must allow women to choose what to do with their own bodies and provide freedom of all sorts which is essential to one's well-being.

As the human rights council, diplomats must tackle the humanitarian aspect of this situation and come up with possible solutions for it. Minorities, especially women and children are always the most affected in times of turmoil and hence they should be given special safeguards and support.

We expect you to discuss and deliberate on the given topic which holds a significant impact in the committee. Delegates must formulate solutions to the crises at the end of the committee and this can be achieved to its fullest potential only through tactful and fruitful debate throughout the conference.



IMPORTANT MODERATED CAUCUS TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED-

- Ø Situation of women and children in post conflict zones.
- Ø Freedom of expression with special emphasis on Iran.
- Ø Freedom of speech with a focus on dissent and criticism of governments .
- Ø Deteriorating reproductive health in women .
- Ø Absence of health care of women and children in post conflict zones.
- Ø Blocking and Impeding of Humanitarian Access in war zones.

