



UNHRC

Welcome Delegates,

Hello, my name is Ana Beltrán, and I am so excited to be your chair this year in the United Nations Human Rights Council in CancunMUN 2024! I am 17 years old and currently a junior at IAS. During my free time, I enjoy painting, reading, knitting, and watching movies. I might like to become an architect or study urbanism someday in Mexico City or abroad.

This will be my fourth MUN conference; I previously have been a delegate of Israel and Australia, both in WHO. I also was a delegate at RIMUN in Rome this year. As you know, UNHRC is a committee focused on topics associated with the human rights of all people and deals with issues related to their violation or non-compliance. Its purpose is to be able to bring solutions to such problems to have a peaceful society, in which all of our natural rights are respected.

As delegates, it is expected for you to be responsible and proactive. You should come to the conference well-informed and prepared. You should be able to debate with other delegates respectfully and effectively. I am eager to work with you and hope you have an amazing experience!

Just as a reminder, the background guide displayed should not be your whole source of information, you are expected to have your own research. Remember to investigate in depth and come prepared for the conference.

If you have any doubts or questions, please feel free to contact me (ana.beltran@ciac.edu.mx). Good luck!

Ana Beltrán, Chair

United Nations Human Rights Council

Dear Delegates,

My name is Nicole Gobera, and I am thrilled to be one of your Chairs in the United Nations Human Rights Council for CancunMUN 2024! I am 16 years old and currently a junior at the International American School of Cancun. In my free time, I enjoy singing, drawing, reading, and hanging out with my friends and family. I am very interested in studying either fashion design or business when I graduate.

This conference will be my fourth MUN experience. I was able to be in CancunMUN as a page in 2022 and then became a delegate for WHO in 2023. I have also had the opportunity to travel to Rome for the RIMUN conference this year. UNHRC deals with issues disrespecting human rights. As a chair of this committee, I believe it is extremely important to talk about these issues happening around the world, which are necessary for all people and are often not respected.

I am delighted to be a part of the conference as a chair in UNHRC and enthusiastic to work with you this year! I expect my delegates to be respectful to each other, as well as being well prepared and having a good work ethic inside the conference. Remember to investigate thoroughly beyond the background guide, as it should not be your only source of research.

I will do my best as a chair to have an amazing committee and make this a great conference for everyone. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at nicole.gobera@ci-ac.edu.mx, good luck, and see you soon!

Nicole Gobera, Co-Chair

United Nations Human Rights Council



COMMITTEE MISSION

The United Nations Human Rights Council is the main intergovernmental body inside of the UN responsible for the protection and promotion of human rights. The committee addresses human rights violations worldwide as well as national situations. The purpose of the committee is to raise awareness and understand the cruciality of human rights, as well as for people to be able to protect their rights and the rights of others.



Topic A: Combating Human Rights Violations in the Gaza Strip

Introduction

On October 7th, 2023, Israel was bombed by the Palestinian group Hamas, over their shared territory. This attack resurfaced the conflict happening since the early 19th century between both of these nations. In the first month of the war, around 11,300 people from both sides were killed. Since then, there have been various series of attacks between the nations, heavily affecting both populations.

Human rights have become an important matter involved in this discussion due to the affected people in the Gaza Strip. Due to this crisis, around two million Gazans have had to flee their homes and live in neglected conditions, such as extreme famine, homelessness, and a preoccupying lack of proper medical care. Therefore, this crisis does not only involve the deaths of thousands of civilians but also the lack of resources and improper quality of life they are left with.

History

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict dates back to 1917, when British forces conquered Palestine from the Ottoman Empire, after 1,400 years of Islamic power in the region. Great Britain publicly pledged with the Balfour Declaration to establish a national home for all Jewish people in Palestine. Increased by the beginning of Nazism in Europe, the UK started to ease European Jews' immigration to Palestine, increasing the Jewish population from 6% to 33% in the territory. Worried about the rapid increase of Jewish people in the territory, anti-Zionist riots started to appear. From 1936 until 1939, Palestinians started revolting against Jewish settlers, in a period known as the Palestinian Revolt, while Israelis were fighting for their new homeland in the Palestinian territory. Armed Jewish militia started attacking Palestinians, forcing them to flee.

In 1947, the United Nations adopted Resolution 181, which separated the disputed territory between Israel and Palestine. 55% of the land was given to Jews, while Palestinians stayed with 45%. The city of Jerusalem, which is incredibly important for Jews, Muslims, and Christians, was divided between east and west for both territories. In 1948, more than 700,000 Palestinians were ethnically cleansed and expelled by Israeli militias, in an event known as the Nakba. Similar events occurred because of the Six-Day War in 1967, in which Israel occupied the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank, and Jerusalem.



The Oslo Accords were signed in 1993, in which both states recognized each other, and peace was longed to be reached within five years. The Second Oslo Accords were signed two years later, dividing the West Bank into three areas; The first one being under complete Palestinian control, the second one under joint control, and the third entirely under Israeli control. Civilians from Palestine and Israel both disagreed with these accords, believing that the agreement was unjust to both sides. This issue led to a decline from both sides of the agreement. Disagreements and uprisings in the years to come made both sides unwilling to make peace happen. Over the next several years, Israel started imposing settlements, including checkpoints, road obstacles, and road barriers inside Palestinian territory.

In 2007, After the Hamas group rose to power, Israel imposed a blockade on Gaza. This blockade has continued for 16 years and trapped more than two million people inside the strip. In this period, five different military assaults have occurred in Gaza between 2008 and 2021. On October 7th, 2023, the Hamas group conducted an air strike on Israeli territory, in which at least 1,200 people died. The Israeli defense countered the attack on the Hamas military forces, destroying the vast majority of Gaza and leaving Palestinians in the territory with little to no resources.





Current Situation

At the moment, various daily attacks have affected not only Israel and Palestine, but also neighboring or close countries, such as Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. Statistics report there being around 29,000 Palestinians have died. Many people in this area are left to live in insecure, overcrowded, destroyed areas, among sickness and hunger, without necessities to survive. There are still various people who are being taken hostage or killed every day, while also being in situations of starvation and homelessness. According to the WFP, 90% of people in Gaza have commonly gone a whole day without eating. There are approximately 4,500 Palestinians taken hostage in Israeli prisons.

Many families have lost their children in the war; around 11,500 children have been murdered. Rockets between both nations continue to strike each other daily. There have also been reported around ten UN trucks of food aid being intercepted by desperate crowds, including one beaten driver, which is why the UN paused the humanitarian aid at that time. So far there have been reports of only around 1,100 people that have been able to exit Gaza, but the other 1.5 million people are still stuck within the Strip.

Most recently, the United States, which has openly supported the nation of Israel since the beginning of the war, has abstained from voting on the UN Security Council's resolution for a ceasefire in Gaza, this being after three times it has used its veto power for resolutions related to this conflict.

The UN has done multiple things regarding this conflict, and since the war broke out they have supported a ceasefire between the nations. Various countries have called but both Israel and Hamas and condemned them for their actions. They have also discussed the implementation of international humanitarian law but have yet to find a solution. According to the UN site, it is advocating for:

- allowing humanitarian access, which focuses on leaving schools, hospitals, and such premises safe for people to use as refuges and the need for crucial resources to be brought;
- "avoiding 'collective punishment'", which argues that there has been a "disproportionate action against Gaza" from Israel's part, calling it out for its drastic measures towards the territory;
- releasing hostages, reminding the need to protect the people.



A solution for this conflict has yet to be found, as it needs to find a common ground between both nations and for both of them to be willing to cooperate.

****Please keep in mind that the information is updated up to the 26th of February 2024. Due to this being a recent conflict, delegates are encouraged to further investigate up to the date of the conference.**

Points To Consider:

- What position does your country take in the matter?
- How has your country responded to the conflict?
- In what ways can your country help aid Gaza?
- What recommendations might be made to help solve the problem? Also consider the Israeli hostages.

Useful links:

<http://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict>

<http://www.indiatoday.in/interactive/immersive/israel-palestine-conflict-saudi-arabia-arab-countries-hamas-war-peace-agreements>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/27/palestine-and-israel-brief-history-maps-and-c>
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www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/15/which-countries-have-criticised-israeli-attacks-on-gaz

Topic B: Extreme Use of Military Force and Arbitrary Detentions

Introduction

Arbitrary detentions are unlawful detentions or arrests of a person without a legal process or a fair trial, deprived of means to defend themselves. According to the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), a person has been under arbitrary arrest if the grounds for the arrest are illegal, the victim was not informed of the reasons for the arrest, the procedural rights of the victim are not respected, and if the victim was not brought before a judge within a reasonable amount of time. People are often detained as a way of suppression by governments. Torture and poor conditions are not uncommon while being illegally detained. Illegally imprisoned civilians receive degrading treatment and often disappear.

The extreme use of military force goes hand-in-hand with arbitrary detentions. Extreme military force often occurs in disturbances and protests. Protests are a way for people to express themselves; they push influential institutions and governments to acknowledge human rights. The use of weapons like gas bombs and guns, as well as physical violence, is frequent in these interventions. The extreme use of military force often takes thousands, if not millions, of civilians' lives.





History:

Both arbitrary detentions and extreme use of military forces are problems that have been present throughout history. Nations and kingdoms have had armies since ancient times, which were mainly used to conquer and gain power over the people. Governments such as the Mongol Empire led by Genghis Khan are known for using violent military armies and tactics to conquer and become powerful over people. This topic was also present during the Colonial Era, in which European powers, as well as others, took control of other territories and are known for their brutal use of armies and weapons; and in 20th-century wars, such as WWI and WWII, the Cold War, and various others.

In present days, though progress has been made, there are still multiple countries that use violence as a tactic to have control over people. Some examples of this are peaceful or harmless to people protests being intercepted by military forces violently, and therefore, unfairly. Interceptions such as this happen all around the world, like the Arab Spring in Middle Eastern and North African countries or in Mexico with feminist marches. A very popular example is the government of Myanmar, which has recently been hit by a military takeover, without much hope of establishing any form of democratic government. This, however, is not new for the people of this country, given that years after its independence from the British empire in 1948, Myanmar, or Burma, was taken over by military commander and politician U Ne Win in 1962 by a coup d'état, becoming a socialist, military dictatorship. Ne Win's government turned Myanmar into one of the poorest countries by the 1980s, as his isolationist and socialist ideas drove the country towards a corruptive and mishandled economy. Due to this issue, many protests broke out in prime cities and student-led manifestations, which ended with a very destructive and gruesome response from the government, killing and imprisoning thousands of people. By 1988, Ne Win resigned his position, and the government was taken over by General San Yu. By May 1990, Burma had its first multiparty elections in 30 years. However, in 2008 a new constitution was implemented, which gave the military power much power even under civilian rule.

In February 2021, in a coup d'état, the military took over the government from civilians. Anti-coup manifestations were violently intercepted by the forces. By February 2024, at least around 6,500 civilians had been killed, including children, and 21,000 people arrested.

Arbitrary detentions have been a major issue in multiple countries for a long time.



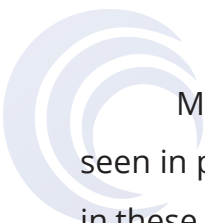
There have been and currently are various cases of people who have been detained for inconsistent reasons. This happens commonly not only in underdeveloped or small countries but also in global powers and major countries. Egypt, China, and Syria are all known for often having cases of unlawful detention, as well as many other countries. Some reasons countries have taken into action this form of corruption:

- a) to repress political or social, civilian manifestations in opposition to the government,
- b) to gain control over the people, arresting anyone who opposes,
- c) To address security concerns during wars and conflicts, both within or outside a nation,
- d) to repress minorities from diverse groups, such as ethnic, religious, lgbtq+, racial, and others.

There are multiple examples in which arbitrary arrest and detention have trended throughout history. One of them is the Gulag, a system of forced-labor camps that was used in the Soviet Union from the years between 1920 and halfway 1950 in which people were uncontrollably imprisoned and labored under dreadful conditions. Around 20 million people were arrested for all kinds of reasons, from being prisoners of war, part of any minority or ethnic group, being suspected of treachery to simply innocent victims. Another is the Spanish Inquisition, in which many people who were suspected of heresy or seemed to oppose the Catholic Church were arrested, detained and could even be executed. Cases such as these have happened all around the world and throughout history, including the present.

Current Situation

Entering 2024, arbitrary detentions are still widely spread in different parts of the world. Approximately tens of thousands of arbitrary arrests occurred in 2023, without taking into account all of the undocumented cases. Thousands of people stood detained without the right to a trial, without knowing the reason for their arrest, and with inhuman treatment. Arraigo, a system in Mexico that allows the detention of a person for up to 80 days, is still widely used and is currently a part of the constitution. In Myanmar, thousands of politicians, activists, and human rights defenders have been detained and sentenced to unfair trials. There have been more than 14,000 victims of arbitrary detentions in Venezuela since 2014.



Most of the illegally detained people have also suffered military brutality. Mostly seen in protests and peaceful assemblies, extreme military force has alarmingly increased in these recent gatherings. Thousands of individuals have been injured or killed because of this extreme use of force. Myanmar's military was responsible for several aerial attacks that took the lives of hundreds of civilians in the country. Lebanon has often ill-treated peaceful protestors with the use of military power. Additional nations; including Mexico, Venezuela, Indonesia, Egypt, and Thailand have employed similar tactics.

Several organizations and UN mandates have helped try to solve these issues worldwide. The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAP) is a mandate commissioned by UNHRC that has helped investigate cases of deprivation of liberty and bring the attention of the cases to the corresponding governments. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an international organization whose purpose is to protect the lives of the victims of armed countries and other violent situations and provide assistance. These organizations have helped improve the state of the circumstances, but there still is a lot to implement for these issues to be utterly solved.

Points To Consider

- Are there any laws in your country regarding extreme military force?
- How common are arbitrary detentions in your country?
- How has your country tried to solve these issues?

Country box:

Argentina

Brazil

Canada

China

Colombia

*Democratic Republic
of Congo*

Egypt

El Salvador

France

Honduras

India

Israel

Japan

Lebanon

Mexico

Myanmar

New Zealand

Nicaragua

Norway

Pakistan

Philippines

Saudi Arabia

South Africa

Syria

Turkey

United Arab Emirates

United Kingdom

United States

Venezuela

Useful links

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/about-arbitrary-detention>


<https://cja.org/human-rights-issues/arbitrary-detention/>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/wg-arbitrary-detention>



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