



United Nations Human Rights Council

MinasMUN

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Head Chair: Anabella Delgado

Co-Chair: Vitor Szuster



LETTER FROM THE DAIS

Dear Delegates,

We would like to welcome you all to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and express our delight and excitement with the opportunity to chair this grand UN body! Moreover, we would like to thank you for your interest in this conference and, in particular, this committee.

The UNHRC is one of the most conventional committees in Model UN; thus, it is fundamental that delegates become familiar with human rights issues and documents, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Furthermore, both topics of discussion are particularly relevant to the diplomatic world as they have been recently addressed in Geneva with a focus on ensuring the safety and rights of innocent individuals, especially women and children.

We strongly encourage you to use this study guide as a reliable source for your research.

However, don't limit yourself from investigating on your own for a better understanding on the topic as a whole. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or concerns whatsoever.

We look forward to being able to support and provide a comfortable environment for the participation of all delegates during the committee sessions!

Sincerely,

Anabella Delgado

anadelgadobastardo@gmail.com

Vitor Szuster

szustervitor@gmail.com

COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION



The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is an intergovernmental body of the UN responsible for promoting, protecting, and addressing situations of human rights violations worldwide. It was established in 2006 to succeed the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR), which had lost its credibility after being led by some of the world's most controversial regimes, such as Cuba and Libya. The council, which meets in Geneva, is a recommendatory committee, that is, of advisory nature. Therefore, its resolutions can be thought of as firm suggestions to the UN Member States since they ultimately lead governments to adopt legislation in line with said recommendations. Furthermore, besides its 47 members elected for three-year terms, the council has special representatives, independent experts, and working groups (like NGOs) that monitor, examine, advise and publicly report on thematic issues or human rights situations in specific states.

TOPIC 1:

MODERN-DAY SLAVERY IN LIGHT OF THE ABDUCTION OF WOMEN RECENTLY REPORTED IN DARFUR





BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Introduction

On December 19th, 2018, a revolution started to spread throughout Sudan; a country located in Northern Africa bordering the Red Sea. After decades of living under President Omar al-Bashir's brutal military regime, civilians pushed back demanding for a democracy in their country and successfully removed him from power. During his rule, Bashir fortified the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) as well as relying on them to maintain order on an ongoing civil war in Southern Sudan, where innocent citizens would be brutalized by them and other militias. However, with the army busy in the south, another war started unfolding in the western region of Sudan in February of 2003.

Darfur was in crisis, causing the death of approximately 300,000 civilians and the displacement of 2.7 million at the worst stages of the conflict. The United Nations has characterized as "the world's worst humanitarian crisis" and the United States government described it as a "genocide" comparable to the Rwandan genocide of 1994. Yet, the international media repeatedly fails to see the issue beyond its political challenges and oftentimes highlights pictures of distressed refugees as well as exaggerated stereotypes of the African continent with little to no intention of aiding the parties targeted.

Moreover, when thoroughly analyzing the situation, it is evident that women and young girls are especially being affected as some are being abducted and held "in slave-like conditions" by the militias. Such a situation has called attention of the international community and has led to multiple UN officials to speak out on the subject and invest in humanitarian programs. Despite all the efforts, given the current circumstances of the women in Darfur, it is evident that more initiatives should be taken to solve the issue and nations must work together in a diplomatic environment to ensure the well being of the people.




Map of the Republic of the Sudan highlighting the Darfur region. ([Wikipedia](#))

History

Prior to the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, the pastoralist Arab tribes and the sedentary African ethnic groups had a relatively stable coexistence despite their cultural and economic differences. However, the colonization of the British following the “Scramble for Africa” among European powers disrupted this social stability as they granted preferential treatment to the Arabs, which essentially initiated the ongoing rivalry between the two ethnic groups over power and resources.

During the 1950s and 1960s, various rebel factions with ethnic affiliations emerged particularly in the South, which led a civil conflict to unfold. In the West, the Darfur Development Front surfaced in the mid-60s, aiming to support the region for economic prosperity and increased



self-governance. Despite its size, a profound sense of exclusion from the rest of the nation stayed consistent among Darfurians, profoundly influencing their interactions with governmental authorities.

Irregular rebellions started occurring, but in 2003, the conflict intensified when rebel groups from the marginalized people such as the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) started violently attacking the formal government demanding for the end of their oppression. Reciprocally, the Omar al-Bashir led state began a brutal operation which relied on milita's such as the Janjaweed which recruited fighters from Arab nomadic tribes, alongside the Sudanese army to target non-Arab communities, which, coincidentally, were mostly Muslim. The massacre resulted in, according to the UN, the death of 300,000 people and displacement of 2 million people in Darfur since the conflict first started, and regional conflicts like these being an active problem to this day.

Current situation

In August of 2020, a peace agreement was signed between the Transitional Government of Sudan (formed following the overthrow of al-Bashir in 2019) and SLM/A and JEM stating how they would cooperate and participate in the transition to democracy in Sudan. Nonetheless, alternative Arab militias have continuously targeted civilians which, according to Human Rights Watch, neither Sudan's transitional government nor the current military rulers have done anything about it and refuse to address the causes of violence in Darfur.

As of 2023, violence against women occurs due to a wider framework of systematic human rights violations targeting civilians. The Janjaweed militia along with the Sudanese army have committed serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law against Darfurians for years now, but women and young girls have been mainly subjected to atrocious forms of violence including killings, bombings, rapes, torture, abductions, and forced displacement. Ultimately, this led the international community to regard them as a "tool of war", and it has become so severe that rape has been broken down into categories by human rights



non-governmental organizations like Amnesty International in human right reports and evaluations.

The drastic increase of sexual violence associated with ethnic and political conflict in Darfur is alarming and demands immediate attention. The lack of accountability and judicial control against those who perform these acts of sexual violence during conflict will only encourage further abominations. Immediate action is absolutely necessary from both the international community and Sudanese authorities to address these serious breaches of human rights as well as urgent assistance to victims and survivors as the damages of this hidden war cannot be overlooked any longer.

Past UN actions

As of November of 2023, Elizabeth Throssell, Spokesperson for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), has demanded the urgent release of the abducted women and girls and for perpetrators to be held accountable, and Commissioner Volker Türk's urges on superiors officials of the SAF, the RSF, and other armed groups to enforce a policy of zero tolerance of sexual violence in their environment.

Before that, on June third 2020, the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution establishing the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) as a special political mission to provide support to Sudan during its political transition to a democratic rule. The same has recently expressed their concerns over the military escalation in Darfur and the UN mission has also called attention to the conflicting parties to ensure civilian safety and ultimate peace. The African Union and the United Nations also have a joint peacekeeping mission in the Darfur region named UNAMID which was established and formally approved by United Nations Security Council Resolution on 31 July 2007, with the goal of bringing stability to the war.

MAJOR BLOCS

United States of America


Historically, the United States has been very proactive in promoting human rights globally and has been involved in various initiatives within the HRC. More specifically, in June fifteenth 2023 Matthew Miller, the Spokesperson for the U.S. Department of State, made a statement for the press stating how the US strongly condemns any form of human rights violations including the large-scale sexual violence and manslaughter based on race and ethnicity going on in Western Sudan. He also highlights how women are unjustifiably affected and how both the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), and alternative militias are at fault for the scale the conflict has achieved.

United Kingdom

Apart from being actively engaged in human rights discussions in the UN, the UK has also played a significant role when addressing the conflict in Darfur diplomatically, sponsoring investigations, and actively aiding through peacemaking missions. The UK Minister for Africa, Andrew Michell, labeled the situation as “ethnic cleansing” earlier this year, demonstrating the government’s understanding of the situation as a whole. It is also crucial to note that the British and Egyptian colonial rule in Sudan had a major impact on this conflict as they unequally distributed resources and power, therefore leaving a strong legacy economically, socially, and culturally in the Sudanese society.

African Union

Founded in 2002 and consisting of 55 member states from the African continent, the African Union (AU) is a regional organization established to promote solidarity and unity within the states as well as defending their sovereignty, abolish imprints of colonial domination, and promote international cooperation. Regarding the recent Darfur struggles, all african countries



seem to be absent from discussions and have not provided the aid the Sudanese victim so desperately need; thus, undermining their credibility as a continental body.

Sudan

While Sudan is the state where the Darfur conflict takes place and has been internationally criticized with accusations of human rights abuse, lack of a stable government and not tackling the problem appropriately, the authorities have attempted to change political dynamics over time. For instance, after the SAF removed Omar al-Bashir from office in 2019, the state has been profound regarding the development of the new transitional government as they have recently aimed for peace, such as when they signed the Juba Peace Agreement (JPA) with Darfur rebel groups in 2020. However, despite their efforts, neither the government nor the armed forces have addressed the causes of the violence in Darfur or explained in detail their intentions with the region.

KEY TERMS

Sexual abuse

“Sexual abuse, in criminal law, any act of sexual contact that a person suffers, submits to, participates in, or performs as a result of force or violence, threats, fear, or deception or without having legally consented to the act. Sexual contact in this context is usually understood to encompass any intentional touching, fondling, or penetration of intimate parts of the victim’s body by the perpetrator for the purpose of arousing or satisfying the perpetrator’s sexual desires or as a means of degrading, humiliating, or punishing the victim.”

* [Encyclopædia Britannica](#)

Ethnic conflict

“Ethnic conflict arises if ethnic groups compete for the same goal—notably power, access to resources, or territory. The interests of a society’s elite class play an important role in mobilizing ethnic groups to engage in ethnic conflicts. Ethnic conflict is thus similar to other political interest conflicts.”

* [Encyclopædia Britannica](#)

Militia

“Militia, military organization of citizens with limited military training, which is available for emergency service, usually for local defense.”

* [Encyclopædia Britannica](#)



GUIDING QUESTIONS

What are the impacts that states suffer from high levels of sexual violence within their borders?

Should the black-created militias be dissolved and punished or are they making progress towards the grant of human rights in Sudan?

How did the British colonization of the area initiate the issue?

To what extent is this an issue coming from governments?

How would the Sudanese government benefit from a society within which their human rights are granted?

TOPIC 2:

ADDRESSING THE GROWING INFLUX OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Introduction


It is true that for most of history, major security threats in one's life would be the triggering of wars and violent conflicts within the area they live. In the current years though, different types of threats have risen in frequency and dimension. As defined by the UN, "Human trafficking is a global crime that trades in people and exploits them for profit. People of all genders, ages and backgrounds can become victims of this crime, which occurs in every region of the world." As one of the main security issues worldwide, human trafficking is a current major issue in Southeast Asia.

The Golden Triangle region, specifically in relation to Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand has been suffering from high levels of human trafficking which rise daily. The issue is mainly centered around the sex industry, with a parcel on forced labor forms. Despite the alertness on the issue, the states in the region aren't taking corresponding actions to the issue, leaving it to only grow and have nocive impacts on the global economy, and obviously, the granting of human rights to southeastern habitants.

History

Human trafficking has been an issue in Asia since far before the 1900s. During uncountable years, human trafficking was fully based on labor. For Asia the flow was bilateral, meaning that people were both being trafficked in and out of the region. For the most part, Asians were trafficked into Europe, while the influx came from the west of Africa, in the form of slaves.

As a result, slavery and human trafficking are issues in Asia that are deep rooted within its society, and although there have been many efforts to combat them, they adapt to different regimes, laws and crises. In fact, what allows these issues to grow are social and economic problems in different regions, tied with conflicts and even natural disasters. That is because the main targets of human trafficking are those in poor social conditions, displaced, desperate and



even people who simply want a better life and are easily tricked, who increase in number every time the living conditions of a certain area decline.


Thus, past natural disasters, crises and conflicts in Asia are fundamental in understanding the current flows of trafficking. Among the major ones are [The East Asian Crisis](#), Vietnam War, Covid-19, and [Displacements by Conflicts and Violence and Natural Disasters in 2022](#).

Current Situation

As the flow of human trafficking grows especially in Southeast Asia, the sex industry and forced labor complexes gain power. Strongly tied to those, the trafficking of synthetic drugs such as methamphetamine (popularly known as meth) grows exponentially, aggravating the matter. As the South Asian countries suffering from these organized crimes make little efforts to solve the issue, other states which are deeply affected by it seek solutions and add alertness to the issue aligning themselves with NGOs and the UN.

The main flows of people are from Southeast Asia to other regions in the world, coming mainly from China, Thailand and Vietnam. Target locations include the U.S. and Japan. As a result, alliances form between nations to try and combat the organized crime in question, such as China's alliance with the United States through which they trade intelligence and efforts to mitigate the flows. The main method used to illegally move humans around is through water, as in Southeast Asia the frequency of international transportation is extremely high, as a result of the geographical aspects of the region (Image 1). Thus, the main efforts happen in the creation of policies that increase inspections on boats leaving and getting to countries and their reinforcement. The main obstacle though has been corruption and lack of resources to make effective reinforcements.

The problem is being highly overlooked as other conflicts occur concurrently, such as the Israel-Hamas conflict and the Russia-Ukraine one develop. Thus, progress is little and the situation is almost stagnant, while many get their human rights violated in the region and the organized crime and sex industries get fed, initiating other issues such as increased tensions



between the United States and China as a big flow of human traffick comes from the Asian nation to the American one.


MAJOR BLOCS

United States of America

Due to its political and economic influence, the United States is highly involved with both causes and solutions to human trafficking. Its main efforts on reducing the issue were the United States' Trafficking in Persons global program in 2001 and the Law on the Suppression of Human Trafficking and Commercial Exploitation, which was also a reinforcer of the U.S.'s pressure on other nations such as Cambodia to take on a larger role in the combating of human trafficking within the country. Contrastingly, the state was also to blame for feeding the issue, such as how the growth of the sex tourism industry in Southeast Asia was aided by the numerous American military installations present throughout the region since the end of World War II. The same happened in the Vietnam War, since American involvement in it boosted the sex industry in the country. Similarly, the United States is one of the main destinations of trafficking networks established in Thailand to move women and children out of the country. Although the nation can be praised for it and has lots of experience in helping combatting the crime currently worrying authorities in Southeast Asia, it can also be pointed to have been a major cause of it and will certainly have to use actions made in the past to guarantee that the debate keeps focus on granting human rights to the current victims of such issue instead of each state's blame on it.

People's Republic of China

Despite its engagement in combating traffic in general (not only human) together with the United States of America, China has bigger involvement in the issue due to its location and economic influence. Because of its geographical location and the major role it plays in the



economy, the People's Republic of China will lead trends in human trafficking, which in current times, have risen. The major flow is from China to the US, which also impacts their relationship within the context of the issue, which was never perfect. On the other hand, the alliance had been very successful in combating the trafficking in illicit drugs, though their efforts have been focused far too much on only the two nations rather than in a global context. Within the debate, China should try to keep the highly beneficial alliance with the United States while advocating around its own flaws on combating human trafficking that affects its ally negatively in abundance.

The Kingdom of Thailand

While Thailand is deeply negatively affected by human trafficking, their industries -- particularly their fishing industry -- have grown dependent on forced labor, making it harder to eradicate trafficking within the country. The state exemplifies how corruption has atrocious effects on a nation, and in this specific example, by heavily collaborating with poor enforcement and the prevalence of the human trafficking in Southeast Asia. Theoretically, there are laws that govern the waters where human trafficking occurs the most frequently. This, however, does little to mitigate the problem as almost all local authorities are involved in human trafficking as well. As a result of the high corruption rates, there is still much room for improvement of Thai-anti-trafficking legislation. The Kingdom of Thailand should be aware of its flaws within the topic and seek solutions to it that involve collaborative effort with other states to both protect its people and the global economy.

Amnesty International

Amnesty International, for being involved with most human rights violations by any states and governments basically anywhere in the world should be prepared to "point fingers" at almost every single delegation in the committee. Its main objective is to use the topic in matter not only

to pressure the different nations to solve it, and provide unbiased views on it built around facts but to remind all others there present of other violations also happening concurrently within their own territories to satisfy the need of stopping and preventing them with urgency.

Human Rights Watch

Similarly to Amnesty International, the Human Rights Watch is concerned basically about how the issue of human trafficking in Southeast Asia violates human rights. As a result, its main focus should be keeping the focus of the debate on human rights rather than political and economic implications of the issue. It should remind nations of their duties on granting its population their human rights and fuel beneficial allies between delegations to combat the issue with urgency.


KEY TERMS

Human Trafficking

“Human Trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people through force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them for profit. Men, women and children of all ages and from all backgrounds can become victims of this crime, which occurs in every region of the world. The traffickers often use violence or fraudulent employment agencies and fake promises of education and job opportunities to trick and coerce their victims.” ([United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime](#))

Transnational Organized Crime

“Organized crime thrives worldwide, affecting governance and political processes, and weakening the advancement of the rule of law. It encompasses, inter alia, illicit trafficking of firearms, drugs, protected species, cultural property, or falsified medical products and, among its most severe manifestations, human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants. It also includes



the laundering of proceeds of crime and obstruction of justice. Moreover, with all forms of organized crime shifting ever more to being dependent on or incorporating online aspects, including the use of virtual assets, its reach and capability of harm is increasing.” ([United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime](#))

Vulnerability

“The conditions determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes which increase the susceptibility of an individual, a community, assets or systems to the impacts of hazards.” ([United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction](#))

Forced Labor

“Forced labour refers to situations in which persons are coerced to work through the use of violence or intimidation, or by more subtle means such as accumulated debt, retention of identity papers or threats of denunciation to immigration authorities.

Forced labour, contemporary forms of slavery, debt bondage and human trafficking are closely related terms though not identical in a legal sense” ([International Labour Organization](#))

Sex Industry

“Business activities that provide sexual services, such as prostitution (= selling sex) and sexual entertainment.” ([Cambridge Dictionary](#))

GUIDING QUESTIONS

How does human trafficking impact the global economy?

What are feasible solutions to human trafficking?

How do the global networks of human trafficking bring other states to the issue?

Who benefits from human trafficking?

Why is human trafficking a problem mainly in Southeast Asia if the trades are made globally?

To which extent are other nations allowed to interfere in a nation's own strategies to combat the issue considering that it affects the global population and economy?



Works Consulted

- [Comparative Approaches; The Collective Efforts of Drug Smuggling and Human Trafficking](#)
- [Human trafficking in Southeast Asia causes and policy implications](#)
- [Development Issues in Asia and the Pacific](#)
- [Human Trafficking in Southeast Asia – IMF Finance & Development Magazine | September 2018](#)
- [UN human trafficking report hails East Asia for strengthening legislation and increasing convictions](#)
- [Troubling Human Trafficking Trends in Southeast Asia](#)
- [Fighting the trafficking of women and children in Asia](#)
- [Sudan: Women and girls abducted, held ‘in slave-like conditions’ in Darfur](#)
- [Darfur - Britannica](#)
- [Sudan conflict: Ethnic cleansing committed in Darfur, UK says](#)
- [Sudan: Darfur: Rape as a weapon of war: sexual violence and its consequences](#)
- [20 years since war began in Sudan’s Darfur, suffering continues](#)



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