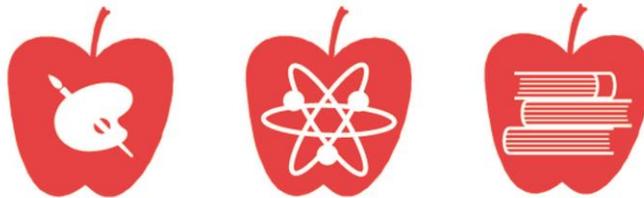


The Lyceum of Monterey County
Model United Nations 2018

**6th Annual Lyceum of Monterey County
High School Model United Nations Conference
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Topic Synopses

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The Security Council

Topic: The Situation in Myanmar

Countries

Bolivia	China	Cote d'Ivoire	Equatorial Guinea	Ethiopia
France	Kazakhstan	Kuwait	Netherlands	Peru
Poland	Russia	Sweden	United Kingdom	USA

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar (formerly Burma) has long been plagued by warfare and violence. A successful military coup in 1962 created a military dictatorship that led to decades of human rights violations and endless civil war. The egregious actions of the government prompted outrage and condemnation from the international community, resulting in sanctions and Myanmar's international isolation. By 2003 the resulting economic impact and political pressure led the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), the country's military regime, to propose a seven step roadmap to democracy to begin transitioning the country into a democracy, run by elected officials. In 2010, the state held democratic elections; many former SPDC officials landed in Parliament, granting them de facto control over the country. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon expressed concerns about the fairness of the 2010 election, stating that it lacked credibility. He also expressed frustration that Myanmar would not speak to nor accept assistance from the international community. In 2011, the military relinquished control to a newly established (and, many argue, still SPDC-run) civilian government, leaving the government in transition for several years as the country instituted a parliament and other nominally democratic bodies.

As Myanmar transitions to civilian rule, regional and intra-national tensions linger. The state held free elections again in 2015, but parliament was filled with candidates from the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP). Despite ongoing democratization, civil unrest and violence continue to ravage the country. Armed militant groups continue to engage in violent clashes with each other and the state military. Disagreements arise frequently between the elected civilian government and the military leadership. Widespread ethnic, religious and political tensions threaten the lives of citizens daily.

In August 2017, militants known as the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army attacked army and police outposts near the Myanmar-Bangladesh border, prompting a severe response by Myanmar's military forces. The ongoing military response has killed thousands of **Rohingya people** (a small Muslim minority), resulted in widespread sexual violence and destroyed civilian homes. More than 700,000 Rohingya refugees have fled from Rakhine state into Bangladesh. Myanmar's political and military leaders claim that they have pursued armed militants and not targeted civilians. They also deny claims of **genocide** or **ethnic cleansing**. Myanmar has stated they would be willing to take back all refugees, should they volunteer to return.

The international community has largely condemned the actions of the government of Myanmar for its actions against the Rohingya people. A significant amount of this criticism has come from states with a Muslim majority, who view the attack on the Rohingya people as an attack on the international Muslim community. The government of Myanmar has expressed eagerness to repatriate the Rohingya people

but has cited bureaucratic delays to the process. Myanmar's leadership has also claimed the government of Bangladesh has exaggerated the number of refugees, and blamed false news for the international outcry regarding the Rohingya people.

In September 2017, Secretary-General Guterres briefed the Security Council on the situation, stating "The situation has spiraled into the world's fastest-developing refugee emergency and a humanitarian and human rights nightmare." In November 2017, the Security Council called upon the Myanmar state to end its use of excessive military force and intercommunal violence against the Rohingya people. In their Presidential Statement, the Council also urged the immediate implementation of mechanisms to return the Rohingya refugees to the Rakhine state in Myanmar, along with cooperation for the transport and allocation of humanitarian aid to those displaced. As recently as February 2018, the United Kingdom addressed the Security Council accusing Myanmar security forces of perpetrating ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya people. In May 2018, Security Council Members traveled to Bangladesh and Myanmar, reporting back instances of mass rape, attacks on children and civilians, and an immediate need for an influx of humanitarian aid for displaced peoples. In June 2018, Christine Schraner Burgener of Switzerland was appointed Special Envoy on Myanmar.

As of January 2018, Bangladesh has nearly one million Rohingya refugees in and around camps within their borders. While the influx of new Rohingya refugees to Bangladesh has slowed considerably, repatriation of existing refugees is proving a considerable challenge considering the continued ethnic hostilities and the destruction of hundreds of civilian villages, leaving nowhere for refugees to return. The International Criminal Court (ICC) has taken up a prosecution request regarding what it is calling the "deportation of hundreds of thousands of ethnic Rohingya to Bangladesh," along with other human rights violations; the ICC is giving Myanmar until 27 July to respond.

Things to consider

- How did this conflict begin?
- Is this a new conflict or a re-ignition of a previous conflict?
- How have similar situations and conflicts been peacefully resolved? What State and regional actors are involved in this conflict?
- If there are non-State actors involved in a conflict, are there any States supporting them? If so, which ones?

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General Assembly: ECOFIN

Topic: Permanent Sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

The conflict over the Occupied Palestinian Territories is not only an issue of disputed territory but also over natural resources. Resources—including land, water, minerals, natural gas and oil—have been contested, with Israel and Palestine both claiming ownership. However, Israel has maintained control over the majority of the resources, including 85 percent of the water. Where Palestine sees this as illegal seizure of these resources, Israel maintains that it has the right to these resources. The World Bank estimates the resources in the West Bank are worth \$3 billion USD, with minerals alone estimated to be worth \$900 million USD. The conflict over resources leads to other pressing challenges, such as violence; it also shapes who benefits economically from the resources. One area of particular contention are the gas reserves off the coast of the Gaza strip. The conflicts over natural resources contribute to larger issues of violence and conflict in the region. While this problem has had continued attention from the United Nations, solutions are difficult to identify.

Though the conflict between Israel and Palestine has been a topic of discussion for the United Nations, the United Nations General Assembly first discussed permanent **sovereignty** over natural resources in the occupied Arab territories in 1973. The resolution was partially a response to Israel's settlement policy established in 1967. The policy encouraged the establishment of settlements in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Golan Heights. These Israeli settlements often cause tension around natural resources, both by using water and land for agriculture and by encouraging mining and other economic activities. In a resolution passed during the 1973 meeting, the General Assembly emphasized the importance of international collaboration to address this problem. The General Assembly requested that the Secretary-General report on specific exploitation and regulations enforced by Israel that may deter Palestinian economic development.

In 1983 the UN General Assembly recognized the rights of the Palestinian people to the resources within the occupied territories and stated that Israel's actions are illegal exploitation of these resources and their economic potential. Israel and its supporters maintain that Israel's actions do not break any laws. They argue instead that Israel has the right to defend itself and its territory. In 2005, the Secretary-General reported on Israel's continued support of new settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories. This report argues that the settlement activity violates international law, blocks investment and commercial activities, and degrades the environment. The Secretary-General notes that many of the same issues exist in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights. The report also highlights concerns about the water taxes imposed upon Palestinians and Syrians, in addition to the wells dug by Israel in the occupied territories. As of 2005, this report and previous resolutions have not deterred Israel. The World Bank estimates that the lost potential income is equivalent of 33 percent of Palestine's GDP, and show that the Palestinian economy shrinks by \$3.4 billion USD annually.

The international community continues to debate this issue, with consensus often difficult to reach. In 2011, the UN Security Council discussed the issue but was unable to pass a resolution on Israeli settlements. Since its first resolution on this topic, the United Nations General Assembly has reviewed

the issue on a biennial basis, passing resolutions expressing concern about the environmental degradation caused by farms and pollution. In order to better address these issues, the United Nations General Assembly tasked United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to provide direct aid to the Palestinian people in resolution 33/147. The UNDP in turn launched the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP) in 1980. Through the PAPP, the UNDP delivers funds and training to the Palestinian people to develop jobs and infrastructure. In order to do this, the UNDP mobilizes the international community for funding, personnel and resources for the PAPP. Since 1980, the UNDP has provided \$1.7 billion USD in development assistance to the Palestinian people. This aid has funded many projects, including those that focus on natural resource and environmental management. The UNDP recognizes the importance of managing essential resources such as water and land. Environmental degradation and water sanitation continue to be major challenges for the UNDP and the Palestinian people. Many areas of the occupied territories struggle with water sanitation. Despite 70 percent of the homes in Gaza being connected to a sewage system, the infrastructure is in need of major repairs and has led to contamination of the aquifer. Continued efforts to address these issues will be crucial to prevent further degradation of infrastructure and ensure access to essential resources.

Today, many agencies in the international community and the United Nations continue to condemn Israeli actions due to their effects on the Palestinian economy. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development called these actions 'de-development' of Palestine in their 2017 report *Assistance to the Palestinian People: Developments in the Economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory*. This report highlights how Israeli actions have negatively affected the Palestinian economy, and shows how resources drawn from the occupied territories play a major role in this downturn for the Palestinians. In addition to the UN, the European Union called upon Israel to stop the exploitation of resources in the occupied territories.

Palestinian protest groups first proposed the boycott, divest, sanction (BDS) movement to pressure Israel to change its behavior. This movement calls upon the international community to boycott products from Israel until they cease construction of settlements, dismantle the separation wall and commit to protecting the rights of the Palestinian people. Opponents of this approach state that it is unclear if BDS has been effective. Some proponents of the two-state solution have also proposed as a solution an agreement that the largest Israeli settlements would be identified as Israeli territory and be exchanged with the same amount of land for the Palestinian people. This exchange of land would also take into account the resources and economic potential of the areas. This solution would require greater coordination outside of the United Nations General Assembly to achieve, but would help address issues with natural resources within the occupied territories. Additionally, consensus within the international community has been difficult to achieve concerning the Israel-Palestine conflict. In order for the United Nations to implement solutions to this conflict, consensus will be an important part to any strategy.

Questions to Consider:

- How can the international community ensure that economic gains from resources in occupied or contested territories are distributed fairly? What role can or should non-state actors play in encouraging resolution of the issue through actions like BDS?
- How can the United Nations ensure that Palestinians have adequate access to water and other essential resources?
- What steps can the United Nations take to prevent further environmental degradation? What role might Israel and Palestine play in preventing that degradation?

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General Assembly: Social, Humanitarian & Cultural

Topic: Globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights

Globalization is a process of greater economic integration with social, political, environmental, cultural and legal dimensions, which have an impact on the enjoyment of all human rights. Beginning in the 1400s, advancements like sailing, the internal combustion engine, the Industrial Revolution and the internet have spurred greater globalization. The rise of free trade policies in the 19th and 20th centuries was also a significant contributor to globalization. Early economic globalization culminated in the creation of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and ultimately the World Trade Organization, which enshrined principles of free trade and globalization. These international efforts focused on reducing tariffs, stabilizing global trade and ultimately expanding global trade.

During the 20th and the 21st centuries, globalization has had both positive and negative effects. While globalization has been a major contributor to economic development around the world, the interdependence it creates has also allowed for national issues to have broad global implications, like the 2008 recession. The creation of global markets has driven down the price of many products, but it also ensures that local production issues can lead to global price spikes. The negative effects of globalization are often felt keenly in developing economies. These markets may have difficulty competing with the prices of imported goods, and state-subsidized production can make this problem worse. The presence of a global market can also encourage localities to create permissive labor environments in an effort to attract manufacturing and other jobs. This can also cause countries to ignore problems such as sweatshops, low wages and child labor in order to keep foreign investment. Finally, globalization can lead to economic trading and integration that encourages cultural mixing, integration and, in some cases, conflict.

The discussion on globalization and human rights stemmed from growing concern in the 1980s that governments were restricting human rights (particularly economic rights) to create a business-friendly environment that would spur economic development. In 1986, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Right to Development, which asserted that Member States have a duty to improve the economic and social capacity of those within their borders but that such developments should not come at the expense of human rights. Globalization created larger challenges for ensuring the protection of human rights while implementing development efforts. In late 1999, the General Assembly adopted its first resolution explicitly on the topic and called for a full report and analysis from the Secretary-General on the relationship between globalization and human rights. The General Assembly made a similar request of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2002.

Early General Assembly reports focused on areas: the impact on agricultural trade and economic disparities and the rise of racism and discrimination in light of globalization and massive technological development. Responses to the issue were mixed. Where some Member States argued that this issue required more attention, others believed that proposed actions would stifle economic growth. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) had one of the most substantive responses. They concluded that globalization was generally marked by economic growth, but also the spread of liberalism. This cultural shift has the potential to destabilize areas and cause declines in human rights including safe work environment and access to healthcare, clean water and food. The growth

itself may necessitate systemic changes that Member States are unprepared for or cannot cope with. This may lead to regional increases in poverty.

The international community has felt many of globalization's potential for destabilization. In 2008, the international community officially declared an economic recession. The 2008 recession exacerbated many of the disparities caused by globalization. The recession led to major economic setbacks and directly impacted Member States' ability and willingness to fulfill their human rights obligations, including freedom of movement, education and health goals. As the instability persisted, many countries began to see major shifts in rhetoric away from globalization and toward nationalistic or protectionist policies. These policies tend to be isolationist, leading States to focus their policies and investments on benefits at home, often to the detriment of the international system. They also create problems for traditional and political rights, as restrictions are placed on dissenting views.

In the past four years, the Third Committee has significantly increased both its disapproval of xenophobic actions and its calls for further reevaluation of the state of human rights and the impact of globalization. Its debate has centered on reducing the gap between the rich and how to ensure that Member States can provide stable, accountable social safety nets for all. Because globalization can disrupt parts of the local economy, social safety nets are a vital tool for States to provide stability and predictability for their populations. These recommendations are controversial, however, because many developing Member States lack the monetary resources to provide social safety programs or lack the stability to implement them. The Human Rights Council also has debated the idea of creating an instrument that would track the impact of globalization on human rights and Member States' mitigation efforts to those negative impacts. This has been a highly controversial suggestion, and Member States have been hesitant to embrace it, largely due to the difficulties in improving some areas of human rights, reluctance to create further mechanisms to which they are held accountable and fear of treating all cases with the same approach.

Looking ahead, the United Nations must meet a few challenges when addressing how globalization has affected human rights. In terms of civil and political rights, globalization has challenged many rights, such as freedom of speech and open elections. As States move to favor nationalistic rhetoric, civil and political rights are stifled to restrict dissenting views. Economic and social rights have also been affected, where social welfare systems and cultural institutions struggle to serve citizens. The international community must find a balance where globalization can continue to foster growth, but the rights of individuals are protected and the resources needed to protect them are in place.

Questions to consider:

- How are the trends caused by globalization affecting civil and political rights? Where are the effects most obvious? How can States and the international community address those impacts?
- What specific impact is globalization having on economic, social and cultural rights? What resources are needed to better protect those rights? How can the United Nations incentivize change? Are enforcement mechanisms necessary and, if so, what should they look like?
- Has modern globalization increased the prevalence of racism? If yes, how can this be addressed?

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