

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
UNITED NATIONS HUMAN
RIGHTS COMMITTEE



Letter to the People

Honorable Delegates,

Hello and welcome to the sixth iteration of the Douglas Southall Freeman Model United Nations Conference! Our names are Neil Dhawan and Samuel Buhler, and we are excited to be your chairs and to lead you through this committee, UNHRC.

Samuel and Neil are a sophomore and a junior respectively in the Center for Leadership, Government, and Global Economics at Freeman High School. Samuel's Model UN career began in high school and has so far enjoyed the challenges that the club has given him. Outside of MUN, he works out at the gym, wakeboards, and volunteers for the SNAPS program to help those with high-functioning autism. He also participates in several clubs at Freeman with his friends, including Spikeball and TSA. Neil's experience with Model UN began in middle school, and he has grown in the competition since then. Outside of Model UN, Neil likes to play tennis and golf. They are both very excited to chair this committee.

We are honored to welcome you to the United Nations Human Rights Council, also known as UNHRC, where issues are discussed: "Reparations for Genocide and Colonialism" and "Establishing Global Standards for Future Atrocities."

While we strongly encourage that all delegates write position papers to gain a stronger understanding of their position, it is not required; however, they are necessary to be eligible and considered for an award. Awards will be given based on one's performance in the committee during moderated and unmoderated caucuses, along with the quality and contents of your position paper. Delegates who make thoughtful and effective contributions to the whole committee through working papers, debate, and collaboration will be recognized for awards by the chairs.

We are honored to be chairing a committee with such potential for creativity, and we can't wait to see the future come to life through your debates. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at unhrcfmunvi@gmail.com. We hope your time at FreeMUN will be just as enjoyable and memorable as ours has been. We wish you good luck with your research and preparation!

Your chairs,

Neil Dhawan and Samuel Buhler

Historical Crisis

UNHRC

Topic I: *Reparations for Genocide and Colonialism*

Topic II: *Establishing Global Standards for Future*

Introduction

The UNHRC will occur in late 2023 on the 13th of October in response to the outbreaks of chaos in formerly colonized nations around the world. Information that delegates communicate to the committee should be factually accurate and be before the date of the UNHRC meeting.

In this committee, there will be delegates representing countries from across the world and those in the UNHRC at the time. Every delegate will have their own identity with beliefs, priorities, values, and goals. The committee will focus on two issues: “Reparations for Genocide and Colonialism,” and “Establishing Global Standards for Future Atrocities.”

The first issue is the debate on whether countries should pay reparations for previous atrocities committed, with the question of whether their past crimes have had drastic effects on other countries. As for the latter issue, some want to have a standard set for reparations to be paid in the case of future atrocities, but others believe that the amount of reparations should be an independent matter between the conflicting parties, rather than by those uninvolved.

Delegates should be prepared to debate long-term policies, uncover the effects of colonization, decide on reparations

for past actions, and draft strong resolutions. Success in this committee will depend on every delegate's ability to think critically, communicate, and work through the problems surrounding the injustices of the past, present, and future, to create a better world for those who suffer due to others. Many in the world need help and are buried in chaos, and it is the job of the UNHRC and all of its delegates to pull them up.

Topic I: **Reparations for Genocide and Colonialism**

Background

For hundreds of years, powerful countries have used their strength to subjugate and claim poorer peoples all over the world. This was especially prevalent with the start of the Age of Exploration, with the colonization of the Americas and later the South Pacific and Asia. The European powers saw fit to colonize all that they could and drain them of their resources, and cripple the chances of successful independence through an economic system called mercantilism. This relied on the colonies lacking all infrastructure to produce

goods, leaving them with the capability to produce natural resources to be shipped off to the European countries to create goods that are then resold to the colonies for a profit.

Mercantilism, along with the European-dominated governments in the colonies, caused them to fall apart once they were able to break free of their European domination. With a lack of experienced leadership in the colonies, chaos broke out over how to run their nations and who should be in charge. The wars that followed halted all progress to a thriving nation for many years, leading them to fall behind Europe and become poorer nations. There is also the country of Haiti, which was forced to pay an extreme sum of money to buy its independence, leading it to have a great struggle.

In a similar situation to the colonization of the Americas, the scramble for Africa occurred in the late 19th century, where a majority of the continent was divided and distributed to the European powers to rule and extract resources for their benefit.

In their colonization of Africa, many atrocities occurred, including the killing of many African peoples and the harsh treatment received by the European powers. Then, when the African countries won their freedom, many nations' political stability fell apart with people vying for power and different peoples being grouped into nations, creating ethnic tension.

An example would be in Rwanda in 1944, where two groups called the Hutus and Tutsi fought each other due to the Belgian policies pitting them against one another, which eventually led to the Rwandan genocide. There was still a heavy reliance on the past Colonial powers for manufactured goods due to most in Africa lacking any of the infrastructure to create the goods. All the African countries had to supply their economies were their natural resources.

Now, a majority of the Poorest nations on Earth are located in Africa due to the deeds of the Colonial Empires.

Current Status

In many former colonies, there is chaos, poverty, war, and death with no help from those who led them to the situation that they are in now. The country of Sudan is in the middle of a bloody civil war that is only looking to continue to get worse. In Haiti, there is a large economic crisis with widespread poverty and people suffering. Due to the recent tragedies and many more, a meeting was called for the UNHRC to meet and discuss solutions to the problem. The idea of reparations from countries that had previously committed atrocities in these suffering countries has been brought to the forefront of the conference, with many agreeing, while others have differing opinions.

Questions to consider

1. How should former colonial powers be held accountable for causing

economic and political instability in their former colonies, if at all?

2. How can we ensure that whatever reparations we decide to enact help the people and are not just punishing a government?
3. Should reparations be purely amounts of money, or should governments have to build things such as schools, hospitals, etc. instead?
4. How should the role of international courts play into making these decisions, if at all?
5. How can we balance the pursuit of justice with modern diplomacy in this issue?

Topic II: Establishing Global Standards for Future Atrocities

Background

Although most debates about reparations have centered on past events, the world now has to decide how to address major crimes as they arise. Since there is no universally accepted international law, responses have varied and are politically based; thus, some crises are promptly attended to while others are disregarded. People afflicted with contemporary crimes such as ethnic cleansing, ongoing discrimination, and resource exploitation usually discover that justice is either quite

slow or completely lacking without clear worldwide rules.

Over the last twenty years, each case has seen somewhat different reactions to human rights abuses. For instance, international courts were established to punish offenders and give some assistance to victims during the Balkan conflicts in the 1990s. On the other hand, nations such as Myanmar and Yemen have received little to no reparations for the amount of destruction they have endured. These stark disparities have raised the question: Are current systems lacking? Are current systems too political? Do current systems focus too much on punishment after rather than prevention?

Those who advocate for global standards argue that the UN should spell out what sets off reparations, define what obligations nations have when they inflict damage, and specify how to impose these regulations. Without these agreements, future crimes could be handled in the same tired and inconsistent manner as in the past. Others, however, fear that strong regulations could impede a nation's independence, be abused for political purposes, or impose great economic and administrative costs on countries.

Current Status

The emergency session of the UN Human Rights Council offers a special opportunity to shape the global treatment of future offenses. The ideas under consideration include drafting legally enforceable contracts for the UN, establishing consistent reparations models

with cash, cultural support, and institutional development, and forming a permanent International Reparations Tribunal.

Some nations, particularly those in the Global South, are pushing for automated reactions depending on UN-verified proof of genocide, large-scale ethnic cleansing, or extended occupation. On the other hand, powerful countries with a history of poor human rights prefer flexible, non-legally binding rules that allow for political negotiation. There is also a growing interest in reparations that do not include money, such as truth commissions, memorials, and pledges to stop similar problems in the future by altering institutions.

Delegates have the difficult job of weighing the requirement to safeguard victims and hold perpetrators accountable against the practical considerations of national independence, limited resources, and the possibility of system abuse. For many years to come, the result of this conference might influence global reactions to such horrors.

Conclusion

This committee is charged with converting common ideals into real laws and deeds. Some suggestions for solutions include establishing a long-term International Reparations Tribunal, writing binding agreements in the UN charter that automatically activate during major crimes, or using a mix of financial aid, cultural support, and institutional assistance.

Ways to enforce these include particular sanctions or making development aid contingent on rule following; optional truth committees and memorial projects would supplement official actions.

Finding the sweet spot between honoring a nation's sovereignty and holding it responsible will be the major problem. We have to develop a system flexible enough for many nations to accept it, but also strong enough to safeguard victims.

Considering the resolutions, ask yourself: Which justifications for reparations are obvious and might be implemented? How might we prevent enforcement from turning into a political controversy? What should be the value of non-financial reparations? Most importantly, how will the decisions your nation takes affect how the rest of the world responds to future major crimes?

Questions to consider

1. How did the economic system of mercantilism, utilized by European powers, cripple the chances of successful freedom and long-term economic development in colonies?
2. What were the consequences of a lack of stable and experienced leadership in the independent colonies?

3. What are the arguments against paying reparations to the countries that had previously committed the harmful acts?
4. How did European division and grouping of different peoples into nations create conflict post-independence? How can the UN get involved to prevent these atrocities in a peaceful manner?
5. Should reparations be based upon the harm done to the people at the time or the long-term impact on the victims?
6. Which moral, legal, or humanitarian justifications for reparations are the most universally accepted?
7. How can the UN create an objective and verifiable process to identify future atrocities like genocide and ethnic cleansing?

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