

**United Nations Human  
Rights Council**



## **Letter from the Dias**

Delegates,

Welcome to MADMUN XIII! We hope that you have an engaging day that will provide insight into current crises in the world, the steps taken to solve them as well as the importance of humanity and tolerance. This committee does deal with sensitive topics, so please be respectful and remember that real people are living through these situations right now. Please also be mindful during committee discriminatory behaviors are not accepted or tolerated.

With hopes and cautions out of the way, please allow us to introduce ourselves. I'm Livia Machado, a senior at Middleton High School and I'll be one of your chairs this year. This is my third and last time chairing MADMUN, so I'm super excited, and I hope to make this conference memorable as well as enjoyable for everyone.

I'm Shradha Godishala. I am a senior at Middleton High School and I will be co-chairing with Livia this year. This is my second year chairing at MADMUN. I will be acting as President Federico Villegas with Livia. I also want to thank you guys for the work you put into your research and commitment to MUN! You guys should be proud of your work whether you win an award at MADMUN or not. I look forward to the moderated caucuses and the resolutions we come up with in this committee.

In 2018 the United States dramatically left the Human Rights Council describing it as, "a cesspool of political bias." The HRC has been rumored to fit this year's MADMUN theme of corruption by more than just the US. While our overarching goal is to deal with the inhumane treatment of humans throughout the world, this is a crisis sim and a potentially corrupt committee, meaning that anything can happen. I'm Claudia VanBendegom, a junior at Middleton High School. This is my first time staffing a conference but I've attended MADMUN for the past two years and I'm super excited to be your Sim!

Best of luck,

President Federico Villegas and The Tooth Fairy

## Introduction to the Council



Formed 16 years ago, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is a body of the United Nations whose mission is to promote and defend human rights around the world. This council has the “ability to discuss all thematic human rights issues and situations” with its 47 elected members that serve a staggered three-year term based on their region.

Additionally, the UNHCR addresses thematic human rights issues such as women’s rights, LGBTQ+ rights, rights of minorities, freedom of association, and many others. The council also reserves the right to investigate claims of violations of human rights, and official allegations of breaches of human rights in any United Nation member states.

This has not been the first attempt by the UN to deal with the protection of human rights, the UNHCR replaced the United Nations Commission on Human Rights with the expectation of being a more effective body; however, the council does have a history of including countries that engage in human rights violations as well as corruption.

## **Topic 1- Syrian Refugee Crisis**

### **Introduction**

In March 2011, pro-democracy groups revolted against the Syrian President due to “high unemployment, corruption, and a lack of political freedom under President Bashar al-Assad” who came into power after his father, the former leader of Syria, passed. As of today, 13 million Syrians are displaced from Syria, and 6.9 million Syrians are displaced within the country of Syria due to the Civil War. It is the utmost priority that Syrian Refugees get access to safe shelter away from the aftermath of the War. Furthermore, Syrians are in need of nutrition, so access to food and clean water is a priority. It is also important to take into account the trauma the Syrian Refugees hold. According to BMC Psychiatry, their “study in 2019 found that 61.4% of Syrian refugees met the DSM-5 symptom criteria for probable PTSD(BMC Psychiatry)” which is why they are in dire need of mental help. Syrian Refugees are in need, and in dire help of the committee of UNHRC.

### **History**

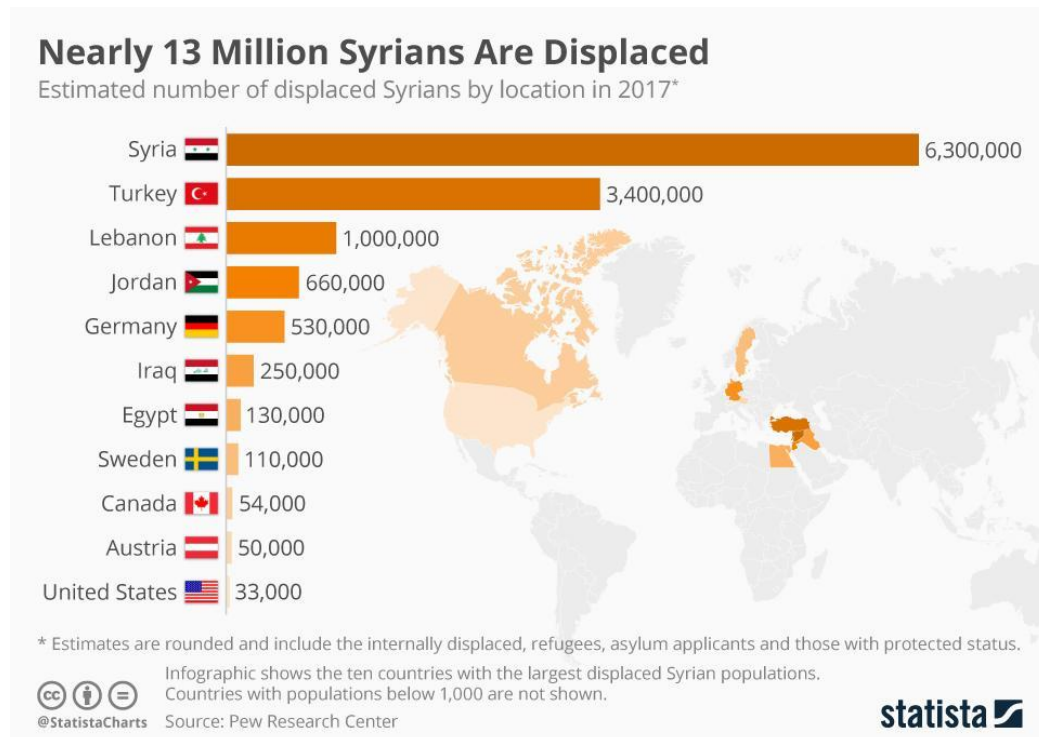
Prior to March 2011, issues within Syria date back to 1970. In 1970, Hafez al-Assad, an individual from the Alawi minority, seized Syria from the Baathist military junta. According to the CFR, the Alawi minority was a “heterodox Shia sect that had been persecuted in Syria(CFR)”. During Hafez al-Assad's reign, he ordered the Syrian military to take down “a Brotherhood uprising in the city of Hama with brute force,” resulting in the death of twenty-five thousand individuals in Hama. So the Assad family has a past history of instigating massacres.

Furthermore, Assad has a past of forcing people within the Syrian government to retire early in order to replace them with relatives from the Assad family so that the Assad family would have more political power. The Assad family used the Syrian economy to benefit themselves but painted the narrative of helping Syria. According to CFR, Bashar al-Assad “broke up and privatized state monopolies, but the benefits were concentrated among those well-connected with the regime, while the end of subsidies and price ceilings harmed rural peasants and urban laborers(CFR)”.

Unhappy with the Syrian government, students began a peaceful protest against the government to push forward a pro-democracy regime. As a result, students turned to social media to spread their protests. Protesters were “arrested, held for days, and tortured”. As Syrians heard about the treatment of their citizens, more and more protests popped up across Syria. President Bashar

Assad acted by using his military power to reprimand the citizens. According to an HRW article, “witnesses consistently reported the presence of snipers on government buildings near the protests, targeting and killing protesters. Many of the victims sustained head, neck and chest wounds, suggesting that they were deliberately targeted”. (HRW)

## Current Situation

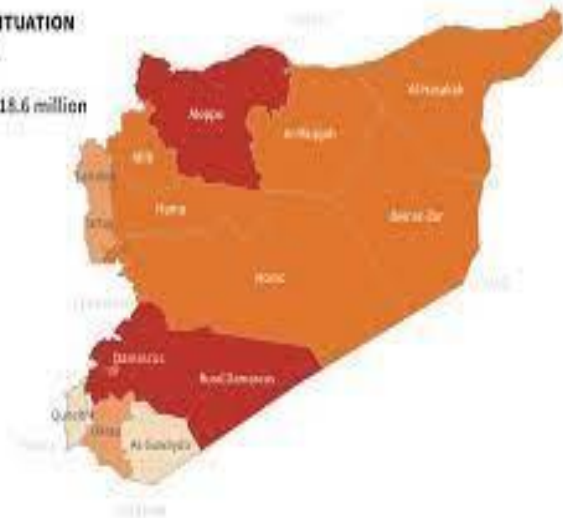


Currently, many Syrians are displaced due to destruction in Syria. According to World Vision, “About 13 million Syrians in total are forcibly displaced, more than half of the country’s population. Of these, 6.8 million are refugees and asylum-seekers who have fled the country. (Asylum-seekers are people who’ve applied for refugee status.) The rest, 6.9 million people, are displaced within Syria.” It is important that the Syrians are helped both inside and outside of Syria. Syrians looking for refuge are in need of countries willing to accept refugees, and Syrians in Syria are in need of refuge as well. According to Statista, “200,000” Syrians have broken apart from their families and lost. In addition to helping Syrian refugees flee or seek refuge in Syria, it’s pivotal that you consider lost Syrians as well.

**FOOD INSECURITY SITUATION**  
(projection for 2017)

Country population: 18.6 million

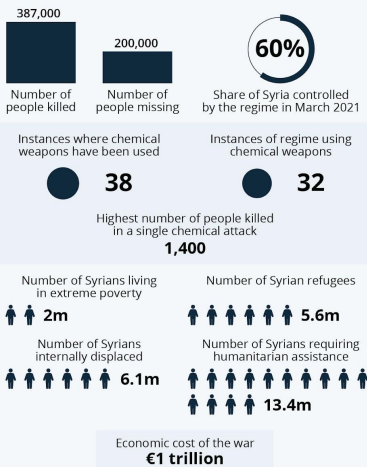
People in need



Many Syrians are in need of food and water as well. From the Relief Web, “Almost two-thirds of the population are expected to face food shortages in 2022(Relief Web)”. That is why it is pivotal that Syrians receive food packages. Furthermore, “An estimated 12.4 million people - about 60% of Syria’s population – suffer from food insecurity. This represents a 57% increase since 2019 and is the “highest number ever recorded in the history of Syria,” according to the World Food Program. This goes to show that food is needed for Syrians both inside and outside of Syria, so keep that in mind in your research.

**10 Years Later: Key Numbers Behind The War In Syria**

Human and economic cost of the war in Syria as of 2021



Source: RTE



Since March 2011, OHCHR “estimates that 306,887 civilians\* were killed between 1 March 2011 and 31 March 2021 in Syria due to the conflict”. This leaves many Syrian families broken, and distraught about how their family members were lost. According to Statista, violence in Syria included the usage of chemical weapons. Damage from losing family members in war is traumatic, and it is important to address the war's usage of weaponry and address the injured Syrians.

## Past Actions

The UNHRC has worked to create the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) for 2021 to help coordinate the Refugee-hosting countries, according to UNHRC. For more information feel free to review the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan; Here is the link <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/syria-emergency.html>.

## Questions to Consider

What are the main issues Syrian refugees face?

How can your country contribute to the refugee crisis?

What are some long-term solutions for saving the refugees?

What are immediate issues that need to be addressed?

## **Topic 2- Ethiopia's Tigray Refugee Crisis**

### **Introduction**

In early November 2020, an armed conflict broke out in the Ethiopian regions of Tigray, Afar, and Amhara causing a full-scale protection and humanitarian crisis. More than 2.6 million people are internally displaced, mostly women and children searching for safety, and two years into the conflict the security situation continues to be ever changing and complex with humanitarian needs higher than ever.

### **History**

Tigray is located in the northernmost region of Ethiopia and is home to 7 million ethnic Tigrayans, an ethnic group with an outsized influence in national affairs. In late 2020, the Tigray People's Liberation Front, a leftist political party that controls the regional government launched a full-scale siege of a pivotal Ethiopian military base at Sero using violence and heavy equipment. The Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed responded by ordering a federal offensive against the region that officially launched the conflict after calling the TPLF assault a "treason that will never be forgotten".



Initially, the TPLF started in the 70s to promote Tigrayan self-determination, and later to the surprise of many, the party became the center of national politics as a dominant player in the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front which led Ethiopia's government for nearly thirty years. Nonetheless, Ahmed dissolved the party in 2019 one year after he became the head of it claiming that the history of ethnic divisiveness needed to stay in the past, and folded the EPRDF into a new party. The TPLF, however, refused to support the change and instead retreated to its base in Tigray rooting the animosity between the party and Abiy Ahmed.

Abiy's government accused the TPLF of trying to destabilize the country by orchestrating ethnic violence after having sidelined the party at the national level. The TPLF on the other hand, accused Abiy of unconstitutionally extending his term after he postponed the country's first truly democratic elections citing the COVID-19 pandemic. A regional election was held in Tigray, but



predictably Abiy's government declared it illegitimate resulting in the two sides questioning the other's legitimacy which led to TPLF's attack on the Sero base and the national government sending the Ethiopian National Defense Forces to Tigray.

## Current Situation

Fresh into the conflict, the Ethiopian National Defense Forces quickly captured many of Tigray's main cities, including the capital Mekele, and Abiy declared the main phase of the conflict over even when the TPLF continues to control large swaths of Tigray. That was two years ago, and in 2021 the Ethiopian government announced that they were in a state of emergency in Tigray. The state of emergency announcement was accompanied by a call for a ceasefire in the region, but the ceasefire has not been accepted by all parties.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet and her office verified extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, and overall atrocities in Tigray, including ones by Eritrean forces whose presence was previously denied by both the Ethiopian and the Eritrean governments. Another UN body has also been active in the area: the UN Refugee Agency. They have been working with local partners and government authorities to provide lifesaving assistance to all people of Tigray who are fleeing to other Ethiopian regions.

Meanwhile, the Ethiopian government started using food as a weapon by blocking food and medical supplies into the Tigray region as well as enforcing a communication blackout, impeding the UN and NGOs to reach out and distribute aid.

### Questions to consider:

How can the Human Rights Council help Ethiopians in need?

Can the council punish Ethiopia for this?

How did your country react? Are they willing to help?

## **Members of the Council for the 2022-2024 Term**

### African States

Algeria  
Benin  
Botswana  
Burkina Faso  
Cameroon  
Congo  
Côte d'Ivoire  
Egypt  
Ethiopia  
Eritrea  
Gabon  
The Gambia  
South Africa

### Asia-Pacific States

Australia  
India  
Indonesia  
Japan  
Malaysia

### Eastern European States

Austria  
Czech Republic  
Estonia  
Finland  
Lithuania  
Montenegro  
Turkey

### Latin America & Caribbean States

Argentina  
Brazil  
Chile  
Costa Rica  
Cuba  
Honduras  
Paraguay  
Peru

### Middle Eastern States

Qatar

Syria

United Arab Emirates

### Western European & Other States

France

Germany

Ireland

Luxembourg

United Kingdom

United States

\*Please note that not all countries are part of the real 2022-2024 UNHRC but were added for the benefit of the conference

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to email us!

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Sim - Claudia VanBendegom ([vc25653@students.mcpasd.k12.wi.us](mailto:vc25653@students.mcpasd.k12.wi.us))

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