

Seton Hall University Model United Nations Conference XIX



Security Council

Background Guide

March 24th-25th
Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ

Letter from the Chair

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2018 Seton Hall Model United Nations Conference. My name is Adam Faddah and I will be your head chair for the Security Council committee. I am a freshman double majoring in Diplomacy and International Relations, and Modern Languages in German and Russian, with a minor in Russian and Eastern European Studies. I've been participating in Model UN since my sophomore year of high school and am a member of the Seton Hall United Nation Association, our competitive collegiate team, alongside being a part of SHUMUN. We are very excited to be chairing the Security Council crisis committee this year.

The Security Council has numerous problems related to global defence and security that it must tackle, but this year we will be focusing on two of the largest and longest conflicts ongoing- the War in Donbass and the Syrian Civil War. Both of these topics represent conflicts that have been instrumental in the shaping of foreign and defence policy in this decade, perhaps more than any other, and we hope will provide all of you with the best opportunity to tackle them with all the tools you have at your disposal through your own diplomatic abilities and our crisis team.

I look forward to meeting all of you and having an interesting, engaging, and above all fun weekend at the conference. We have a great committee this year, and I'm excited to see where you all will take it! Please do not hesitate to email me, or the committee's Crisis Director Axel Sontgerath, with any questions that you may have at shumun.sec@gmail.com.

Regards,

Adam A. Faddah

SHUMUN

Letter from the Crisis Director

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 19th annual Seton Hall Model United Nations Conference! We are excited to see that you have joined us today, ready to discuss and find solutions to real world issues. My name is Axel Sontgerath and I am happy to be serving as your Crisis Director for this committee session. I am a Freshman at Seton Hall University, and am triple majoring in Diplomacy and International Relations, Modern Languages (Chinese and Arabic) and Philosophy. I have been in Model U.N since the 8th grade and share a great passion for this outstanding way of approaching international relations .I have also been an active participant of our competitive collegiate team, The Seton Hall United Nations Association. On behalf of the SHUNA delegation, I welcome you all.

Our objective of this conference is to maximize your experience in exploring international affairs and engaging in diplomacy with your fellow delegates. The hope is for you to take away a newfound passion for becoming more aware of the current challenges of our world. We intend for you to leave this conference with a greater sense of confidence in regards to discussing current events and public speaking.

It is our hope that post-conference you will have acquired a better sense of the global issues that face our modern society. We thank you for all of your diligent work in preparing to represent your nation. We hope you utilize the Crisis staff to your fullest extent, and have a great time behind the scenes as well as out in conference!

Please read through this background that myself and your chair, Adam Faddah, have crafted for you carefully, as it has pertinent information for you all to be successful in this committee. If you have any questions, please feel free to email myself or Adam. We are happy to answer any and all inquiries and hope you all enjoy yourselves immensely. Once again, I welcome you all to the 19th annual Seton Hall Model United Nations Conference!

Your Crisis Director,

Axel B Sontgerath

Introduction

The United Nations Security Council is one of the six core organs of the United Nations established in the United Nations Charter in 1945. It is arguably the single strongest body within the entirety of the organization. This is in large part because the Security Council has the ability to authorize its members to enforce its resolutions through the use of military force. The most famous example of this is UN intervention in the Korean War in 1950, but is much more commonly represented by the numerous peacekeeping missions carried out by the United Nations across the globe.

The Security Council is made up of fifteen members, divided between five permanent members and ten non-permanent members which are elected for two-year long terms. The five permanent members are the Russian Federation, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and China, and each hold the power to veto any Security Council resolution. The ten non-permanent members are elected based on a regional dispersion from the United Nations five regional groups.

The structure and membership of the Security Council has been altered slightly to better fit the needs of this committee. While we have kept the fifteen members of the Security Council, we have changed some nations to better fit the committee in order to provide all delegates the ability to have more equal stakes in the topics being debated. In addition, we have added six observer states to the committee that we feel will provide more substance and diversity to the debate in committee. These states are, for all intents and purposes, an additional six non-permanent members of the committee. Each of the five permanent members have veto power and can veto any directive on the table. A 'No' vote from any of the five permanent members counts as a veto for that directive. Although this is a crisis committee, there are no portfolio powers. As countries, each delegate has the resources of his or her country at their disposal which can be assessed and used through the Crisis team.

Now we move on to the structure of the Crisis committee. In order to work with Crisis you must pass notes to up to the front of the Dias, where a member of the Crisis staff will collect them and write them electronically to send them to the Crisis room. We will update you in three different ways: If private, the Crisis staff will write back to you on the note you sent, if it has public implications we will either post it up on our live Twitter feed or make an in-person Crisis update, where we will enter the room and deliver it to you face-to-face. During an in-person Crisis update you will be allowed to ask the Crisis staff as many questions as you'd like.

The War in Donbass

The War in Donbass began in the aftermath of the 2014 Ukrainian Revolution and the Euromaidan movement, following the ousting of Viktor Yanukovich from the Ukrainian Presidency. Pro-Russian and anti-government protests began in the beginning of March 2014 within the eastern Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts of Ukraine, collectively referred to as the Donbass region. These protests followed the occupation and annexation of Crimea by Russia at the end of February. Throughout April, pro-Russian and anti-government protests escalated to the storming of government buildings by armed groups in both oblasts, and soon after the declaration of the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic. The first major clash of the war occurred in the city of Sloviansk on April 12, where pro-Russian separatists led by Igor Gorkin, a retired FSB officer, took control of the city.¹ The city was besieged by Ukrainian military forces the city, and eventually recaptured on July 5 by the Ukrainian government after 105 combatants on both sides and 20 civilians were killed in the fighting.² A similar event also occurred in the Donetsk town of Kramatorsk, which was also captured on the same day. Fighting continually escalated throughout the year and was punctuated by two events in July 2014 and January 2015. In July, Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 was shot down by a Russian-made surface-to-air missile while flying over eastern Ukraine, killing all 298 passengers and crew on board.³

Several months later, in January 2015, the Battle of Debaltseve ensued as Separatist forces launched an offensive against Ukrainian government forces after losing ground to the government the previous year. Debaltseve was notable not just for how bloody it was, but because it became an example of the deadly effect of Russian military forces fighting in the Ukraine. The battle was a key part of the documentary "Selfie Soldiers" made by Simon Ostrovsky, which used social media photographs of a Russian soldier and interviews with residents of the area to definitively prove the presence of Russian military forces, including tanks, at the battle.⁴ The presence of Russian troops in Ukraine, which is denied by Russia, and the annexation of Crimea prompted sanctions against Russia from the West, which helped contribute to the Russian economic recession of 2014 from which it has since recovered.⁵ Since Debaltseve, the war has devolved into a stalemate between the Ukrainian government and Russian-backed Separatist forces, with constant fighting despite the signing of the Minsk and Minsk II protocols, which were supposed to introduce ceasefires into the region. NATO support for Ukraine has come from the supply of equipment, but not weapons, and NATO troops being deployed to Ukraine to train Ukrainian troops.⁶ The war in Ukraine has instigated what has been called by some, including former Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev, a second Cold War as NATO support for Ukraine encompasses numerous massive military exercises in Poland and Romania, as well as the deployment of

the largest contingent of U.S. and British troops to continental Europe since the end of the Cold War. This has been reciprocated by Russia with numerous exercises within Russia, and the Zapad 2017 exercise with Belarus, the largest military exercise carried out by Russian military forces since the Cold War. With the human cost of the conflict at over 10,000 killed, 24,000 wounded, and over a million Ukrainians internally displaced, pressure has been mounting on all actors involved, despite the lack of any end in sight.

The Syrian Civil War

The Syrian Civil War is an ongoing armed conflict between the brutal regime of Bashar Al-Assad and various rebel groups scattered throughout the country. This initial unrest started as part of the larger widespread Arab Spring protests in 2011⁷, in which the people were in discontent with the Assad regime and asked for his removal from office. These protests escalated into a full armed conflict when the Assad's government attempted to violently suppress them by using the full extent of his military power against his own people. The actors in this armed conflict are split up amongst many factions: the Syrian government and its allies, a loose alliance of Sunni Arab rebel groups (including the Free Syrian Army), the majority-Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), Salafi jihadist groups (including al-Nusra Front) and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), with a number of countries in the region and beyond being either directly involved, or providing support to one or another faction.⁸ The Free Syrian Army (FSA), was a group of rebels that took over Aleppo and other parts of southern Syria. Eventually, some of these groups broke off from the FSA in pursuit of Islamist ideals and joined either ISIL or the al-Nusra Front. As of 2015⁹, a group called the People's Protection Units (YPG) joined forces with Arab, Assyrian, Armenian and some Turkmen groups, to form the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). As far as Assad's government's allies, Iran, Russia, and the Hezbollah have supporting them militarily since the beginning of the conflict in 2011¹⁰. Since 2014¹¹, a coalition of NATO countries began launching airstrikes against ISIL.

Over the course of this civil war, international organizations have accused all three groups involved (the Assad regime, ISIL and the rebel groups) of severe human rights violations and large-scale massacres. The Assad regime in particular has been under serious international pressure and accusation for using illegal chemical weapons¹² against its own people. The conflict has also caused an unprecedented and incredibly dire refugee crisis that has affected many countries in Europe you have to grapple with the overwhelming influx of refugees.

Over the course of the war a number of peace initiatives have been launched, including the March 2017 Geneva peace talks on Syria led by the United Nations, but

fighting continues. A current round of peace talks hosted by Russia have caused concern among other powers over ever-growing Russian influence in the Middle East. In mid-January 2018, Turkish military forces invaded the Syrian region of Afrin held by U.S.-backed Kurdish YPG forces, the same YPG forces that proved instrumental in the defeat of ISIL. The Turkish operation has elicited much concern from the global community and a furious reaction from Assad, and was done in defiance of U.S. warnings. Likewise, the Russian military left its positions in Afrin prior to the operation, a move that was believed to be in order to secure Turkish support for the Russian peace process in Sochi. It has yet to be seen what impact this will have on the two main peace talks held, as well as what impact this operation will have in these late stages of the war.

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