

Seton Hall University Model United Nations Conference XIX



United Nations Human Rights Council

Background Guide

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

Letter from the Chair

Hello everyone!

My name is Hanna Wargula and I will be your chair for the UN Human Rights Council. I have been involved with Model UN for nearly six years and this is my second time chairing a GA committee for SHUMUN. I'm a sophomore diplomacy student here at Seton Hall studying Arabic, Spanish, and sustainable development as parts of my degree. Feel free to contact me with any questions concerning the topics of our committee at shumun.sec@gmail.com.

I am looking forward to meeting you all and hope for a fun and productive weekend of conference.

Your Chair,

Hanna Wargula



Myanmar

Background

Myanmar, also referred to as Burma, is a nation stationed between India and China, a central state in Southeast Asia due to its coastal nature and river valleys. After a history of colonization by the British, Myanmar became an independent state in 1948. Since then, the country has been primarily governed by dictatorial military regimes, and it has had elections only five times since its independence until 2010. This situation of political instability, is best exemplified by a complete lack of a constitution until 2008, and that the present constitution gives a majority of the seats to the military faction. The nation is home to over 136 ethnic groups, out of which only one is unofficial.

This group, the Rohingya, is a Muslim minority in the Buddhist majority nation and are interpreted by many to be horribly persecuted. They occupy the Western portion of Myanmar, near Bangladesh, as a result of their entrance the country after decolonization



in hopes of finding labour. They must be granted permission to leave their decrepit settlements, within which they are denied basic amenities and employment opportunities. "There is no such thing as Rohingya. It is fake news.," said U Kyaw San Hla, a state official of Myanmar, confirming the fact that the government refuses to consider the Rohingya as citizens regardless of their

lineage tracing back from centuries of Myanmar's history. Despite the strides Myanmar has made politically turning from a military dictatorship to a democracy in 2011, culminating in the landmark election of 2015 there is still deep discrimination and persecution of Rohingya Muslims. They have quickly become the most persecuted minority in the world according to a Human Rights watch Report and are considered a stateless people by the UN. Violence from both sides have escalated leading to hundreds being killed and thousands being displaced. Both citizens and the government alike have targeted the Rohingya Muslims.

The 2012 riots and the more recent violence in 2016 by Muslim extremist groups have not helped to assuage fears. Protecting the country from Muslim influence has become a matter of national security for many in the country. This is part of the reasoning behind the current discriminatory and violent actions of the government and the people. As Aung San Suu Kyi phrased it in an interview, "Fear in Myanmar is not (only) of a small minority



within Myanmar, but of a global threat felt to be both surrounding the country and growing within it". There is an obvious disconnect when different parties refer to the events in Myanmar. Multiple outside sources including Nobel Laureates and Human Rights Watch consider the actions against Muslims a form of ethnic cleansing and genocide. The Buddhists, however, consider themselves the offended party. U Zaw Aye Maung, the Rakhine

Affairs Minister for Yangon Region, "if genocide was taking place in Rakhine State, then it was against ethnic Rakhine Buddhists." They consider themselves the heroes of this story and have been heard shouting "We are Buddhist martyrs". The timeline between 2015 and now has little information since after the election of Aung San Suu Kyi the country went into a period of isolationism that it is only now emerging from.

Timeline

RECENT EVENTS OF ROHINGYA CRISIS	
October 9	Three Myanmar border security outposts attacked, nine killed
October 10	Troops deployed in Rakhine state; aid suspended
October 14	Myanmar blames militant group Aka Mul Mujahidin for attack
November 2	Nine diplomats and a UN official visit affected areas
November 12	Helicopter gunships open fire on Rohingya villages
November 18	UNHCR urges Bangladesh to open border for Rohingyas
November 23	Bangladesh summons Myanmar ambassador, expresses concerns
November 24	Foreign minister briefs diplomats about Rohingya crisis
November 30	UNHCR claims 10,000 Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh
December 6	21,000 Rohingyas arrived in Cox's Bazar from October 9-December 2
December 7	PM says she is sympathetic towards Rohingyas but hard against militants

1948 — Myanmar gained independence

1962 — Military coup

1970s — Beginning of anti-Rohingya crackdowns in the Rakhine State

1982 — Rohingya denied citizenship until present day

2008 — Constitution drafted

October 2016 — Influx of troops to the Rakhine

August 2017 — Clash in Rakhine where government officials were attacked

Questions to Consider

1. If and how can the international community assist the Rohingya?
2. What actions can Aung San Suu Kyi take to bring stability to her country?

3. What could be the underlying causes to the conflict besides religious tension and how can they be solved?

Biological and Chemical Warfare

Background



Chechnya is a Republic in the south of Russia governed by a Russian appointed leadership. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Republic declared independence in 1991, followed by military intervention by the Russians which lasted approximately a decade. Chechnya eventually was annexed by the Russian Federation in 2003. The region has a significant Islamic population and has multiple active jihadist groups. The different religions and the claims of independence made by the people of Chechnya have led to very serious conflicts between the original population and the Russian government and citizens living in the region. There have been multiple terrorist attacks in Russia in the past few years because of this ongoing conflict, one of the most important one being the terror attack on Beslan, where a group of terrorists first abducted 1200 students and teachers of a school in the region of North Ossetia, and then killed more than 300 of them. However, there is a more covert operation that has caused death and fear across Chechnya.

Within the last two years, a scandal has evolved in which the local Chechen government has come under scrutiny for accusation of human rights abuses against the gay individuals in the area. The accusations have been becoming increasingly heavier, and it appears that the local government held the victims in “concentration camps”, where some were tortured to death. There have been reports of men simply disappearing and of others being brutally tortured and abused of. According to an April report by the Humans Rights Watch, at least three men have died since the beginning of the persecutions of the local government. The people targeted are all part of the LGBT community, and ethnicity and religion have nothing to do with the selection of the victims.



The issue is complicated by the different political figures and their relative responsibilities in the case. Apparently, the operations were conducted by the local Chechen government, and there is an ongoing power struggle between the aforementioned government, and the Federal government. Especially in recent months the Russian organs such as the Human Rights Committee and the Committee to Prevent Tortures have mobilized themselves to start gathering information and to form a clearer picture of the situation. At the same time, despite having numerous first-hand testimonies from the Chechens that have been tortured, the Chechen government continues to negate any kind of involvement, with its leader, Mr. Ramzan Kadyrov, stating that: “This is nonsense, we don't have those kinds of people here. We don't have any gays”.

The story went public after multiple victims came forward and told their stories after escaping and finding asylum in other nations. For instance, Canada has quietly taken in 31 fleeing LGBT individuals as of September 2017. After news spread of the heinous activities occurring, multiple entities, state and non-governmental, condemned the deviation from human rights and state sponsored denial of these people as existing. Currently, multiple organizations, both Russian and international, are trying to help victims and potential detainees to escape from Chechnya to another region of Russia or to another country. —

Timeline

February 2017 — Large scale detention of victims by the Chechen government and their torture

1 April 2017 — The Russian newspaper, Novaya Gazeta brings forward the allegations

5 May 2017 — Formation of an investigative unit by the Russian government

16 May 2017 — Three French human rights organizations accuse the Chechen government of genocide while filing a complaint with the International Criminal Court

18 July 2017 — Mr. Kadyrov, leader of the Chechen Republic, reiterates that there are no gay people in Chechnya

Questions to Consider

1. Can the Russian government be held accountable for the human rights violations in Chechnya?
2. How should the international community react to these crimes?
3. How can the UNHRC gather the necessary support to enforce any potential punishment?
4. What measures can the UNHRC take to provide more safety to members of the LGBT community in Chechnya.

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