



PragueMUN 2023

Through Hardships to Peace



STUDY GUIDE

UNHRC

It's time to be UNique!

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Table Of Contents

Letter of Welcome	3
History of the Committee	4
The mandate of the Committee	6
Topic A: Human Rights Violations in the Syrian Crisis	8
Introduction	8
History of the Problem	9
Major Challenges	13
1. Involvement of Multiple Parties and Perceptions	13
2. Denial of Humanitarian Access	14
3. Migration to Neighboring Countries and Refugee Camp Settings	15
4. Arbitrary Detention and Enforced Disappearances	17
5. Sexual and Gender-Based Violence	18
6. Challenges in Providing Humanitarian Assistance	19
7. Challenges due to COVID-19	19
Previous International Action	20
Involvement of Other International Actors	22
Questions A Resolution Must Answer	22
Topic B: The Right to Peaceful Protesting in Iran	27
Introduction	27
History of the topic	28
Discussion on the issue and subtopics	30
1. Unprecedented Protests : Mahsa Amini	31
2. A long-lasting revolt	32
3. The end of the morality police	33
4. What is Peaceful Protest ?	35
5. Following the announcement of the end of the morality police, is the fight over ?	37
Previous International actions	39
1. Under American pressure, the UN expels Iran from a commission on women	39
2. Insufficient measures according to Human Rights Watch	40

Letter of Welcome

Greetings Delegates!

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the academic stimulation of the United Nations Human Rights Council of the Prague MUN 2023. In this committee, we present to you two very challenging and important topics in today's time which is "Human Rights Violations in the Syrian Crisis" and "The right to peaceful protesting in Iran." Please note that this background guide is in no way meant to be an exhaustive guide on the subject, but merely a stepping stone for the rest of your research, which you are expected to undertake independently. Also, not under any circumstances can the background guide be quoted or used as substantial proof in committee sessions. The more information and understanding you acquire on the agenda, the more you will be able to influence the documentation process through debate in the committee.

We understand that MUN conferences can be an overwhelming experience for first-timers but it must be noted that our aspirations from the delegates are not how experienced or articulate they are. Rather, we want to see how they can respect disparities and differences of opinion, and work around these while extending their own foreign policy so that it includes more comprehensive solutions without compromising their own stand and initiating consensus building. New ideas are by their very nature disruptive, but far less disruptive than a world set against the backdrop of stereotypes and regional instability due to which reform is essential in policy making and conflict resolution. Thus, we welcome fresh perspectives for intelligent management of human capital which shall shape the direction of this world. We are looking forward to meeting you all soon. Don't be afraid to speak up and be heard.

Regards,

Ashima Jha

Hugo Berny

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History of the Committee

The United Nations Human Rights Council is a United Nations body whose mission is to promote and protect human rights around the world. The UNHRC has 47 members elected for staggered three-year terms on a regional group basis. The Council was created by the United Nations General Assembly on 15 March 2006 by resolution 60/251. Its first session took place from 19 to 30 June 2006. One year later, the Council adopted its "Institution-building package" to guide its work and set up its procedures and mechanisms.

Prior to the Human Rights Council (HRC), the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) – established in 1946 – had lost credibility after being led and included some of the world's most repressive regimes (In 2003 for instance, Libya and Cuba chaired the Commission while Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Zimbabwe were members) – leading some gross situations of HR violations being ignored. As a result, the commission was criticized for being infected by politicization and selectivity. In 2006, after long negotiations with some states supporting that the future HRC candidates for membership be states with “a solid record of commitment to the highest HR standards” and be elected by a 2/3rds majority of the UN General Assembly (GA), a much ‘watered down’ reform was adopted, including the lighter requirement that candidates for membership receive the votes of an absolute majority of the GA. Members of the HRC are elected for a period of 3 years and distributed into regional groups including 13 from Africa, 13 from Asia, 6 from Eastern Europe, 8 from Latin America, and 7 from ‘Western Europe and another group’.

Today, the body of international human rights law continues to expand and new human rights standards are being built on the Universal Declaration to address emerging human rights issues. In the 21st century, UN Human Rights has helped achieve greater protection of the rights of neglected population groups such as indigenous peoples, older people, people with disabilities, and people belonging to the LGBT+ community. The Office has also brought to the fore the link between human rights and climate change.

Over time, a number of UN human rights bodies have been established to respond to evolving human rights challenges. They rely on UN Human Rights staff for both substantive and secretariat support in discharging their duties. These bodies include the Human Rights Council and its thematic and country-mandated independent experts known as special procedures; and

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the 10 core treaty bodies of independent experts that monitor States' compliance with their treaty obligations.

The HRC functions by a mechanism of 'Universal Periodic Review' consisting in the organization of three annual sessions – held in March, June, and September – which submit an annual report to the GA. These regular sessions – presided over by an elected president and vice president – can be extended by requesting special sessions. Additionally, the HRC also includes an 'Advisory Committee' containing a panel of experts and advisors, and functions through the participation of individuals and organizations which through the 'Complaint Procedure' are able to bring forward specific human rights issues. Finally, 'Special Procedures' led by 'Special Rapporteurs' exist within the HRC to research and counsel on country-specific and thematic issues and report on these annually to the GA.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected and it has been translated into over 500 languages. Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 (General Assembly resolution 217 A) as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations.

Articles (in short) mentioned in the UDHR are:-

Article 1	Right to Equality
Article 2	Freedom from Discrimination
Article 3	Right to Life, Liberty, and Personal Security
Article 4	Freedom from Slavery
Article 5	Freedom from Torture and Degrading Treatment
Article 6	Right to Recognition as a Person before the Law
Article 7	Right to Equality before the Law
Article 8	Right to Remedy by Competent Tribunal
Article 9	Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest and Exile
Article 10	Right to Fair Public Hearing
Article 11	Right to be Considered Innocent until Proven Guilty
Article 12	Freedom from Interference with Privacy, Family, Home and Correspondence

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Article13	Right to Free Movement in and out of the Country
Article14	Right to Asylum in other Countries from Persecution
Article15	Right to a Nationality and the Freedom to Change It
Article16	Right to Marriage and Family
Article17	Right to Own Property
Article18	Freedom of Belief and Religion
Article19	Freedom of Opinion and Information
Article20	Right of Peaceful Assembly and Association
Article21	Right to Participate in Government and in Free Elections
Article22	Right to Social Security
Article23	Right to Desirable Work and to Join Trade Unions
Article24	Right to Rest and Leisure
Article25	Right to Adequate Living Standard
Article26	Right to Education
Article27	Right to Participate in the Cultural Life of Community
Article28	Right to a Social Order that Articulates this Document
Article29	Community Duties Essential to Free and Full Development
Article30	Freedom from State or Personal Interference in the above Rights

The UDHR not being a treaty, doesn't have any binding legal obligations, but since its announcement, the document has profoundly influenced the development of international human rights law.

The mandate of the Committee

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN Human Rights) is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote and protect the enjoyment and full realization, by all people, of all human rights. The UN charter's Article 1.3 states that "The purposes of the United Nations [include] promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion." – As well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted by the UN in 1948.

The UNHRC investigates allegations of breaches of human rights in UN member states and addresses important thematic human rights issues such as freedom of association and

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assembly, freedom of expression, freedom of belief and religion, women's rights, LGBT+ rights, and the rights of racial and ethnic minorities.

Today, the HRC's work is also guided by the documents of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966), and its two Optional Protocols – commonly referred together as the International Bill of Human Rights – as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Thus, the Human Rights Council is called upon to rule on

- The promotion and protection of all human rights, for all.
- The recommendation towards UN bodies to improve their promotion and protection of all human rights.
- The promotion and protection of the right to development.
- Providing technical assistance to States for human rights activities.
- The coordination of UN human rights education and public information programs.
- The active work to remove obstacles to the realization of human rights and prevent the continuation of human rights violations.
- The engagement in a dialogue with Governments in order to secure respect for all human rights.
- Enhancing international cooperation for the promotion and protection of all human rights.
- The coordination of human rights promotion and the protection of activities throughout the United Nations system.
- The rationalization, adaptation, and reinforcement of the UN human rights machinery.

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Topic A: Human Rights Violations in the Syrian Crisis

Introduction

Located in the Middle East, Syria is bordered on the east by the Mediterranean Sea and shares borders with the countries of Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, Israel, and Lebanon. Hence, Syria is a part of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The region includes approximately 19 countries, according to World Atlas. The MENA region accounts for approximately 6% of the world's population, 60% of the world's oil reserves, and 45% of the world's natural gas reserves. Due to the region's substantial petroleum and natural gas reserves, MENA is thus, an important source of global economic stability.

This region faces significant challenges, including situations of armed conflict, the rise of violent extremism, the counter-terrorism narrative affecting civil and political rights, and deeply rooted discrimination against groups. Apart from this, long-standing conflicts/disputes, such as the Israeli occupation of Arab territories and Violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Palestine, and Yemen have impacted heavily on the human rights situation in the region. Of all these nations, Syria in particular is facing one of the most complex humanitarian emergencies in the world. About two-thirds of the population in Syria requires assistance because of a worsening economic crisis, continued localized hostilities, mass displacement, and devastated public infrastructure.

In the course of more than 11 years of crisis and conflict, the civilians of this country have suffered numerous cases of abuse in the form of freedom of expression, association and assembly, gender inequality, lack of humanitarian access, right to health, and war crimes. About 306,000 civilians have lost their lives as a result of warring parties disregarding human rights and humanitarian law since 2011. Using prohibited chemical weapons, unlawful indiscriminate attacks, and withholding humanitarian aid, the Syrian government raced to secure territories with the support of its allies, while anti-government groups attacked areas controlled by the government indiscriminately and prevented civilians from fleeing. A number of arbitrary detentions, kidnappings, and tortures were committed by the warring parties. Contrary to all other parts of the world, this region experienced a decline in life satisfaction before the COVID-19 pandemic, and the situation became grave afterward. A deadly combination of escalating

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violence, an economic crisis, and a humanitarian catastrophe is currently causing new levels of hardship for the population in Syria.

In regard to the given agenda, our expectation from you is to consider multifaceted branches of the problem rather than just focusing on one. The problem is not just related to the conflict in Syria, but also, its after-effects on the economy, health, and livelihoods at large. The current life of the civilians and their perilous situation at refugee camps have gravely impacted their basic human rights. We would highly recommend you take into consideration the principles like solidarity, accountability, transparency, equity, affordability, and collaboration while formulating solutions and presenting analysis. This will be more effective when you utilize different departments and bodies that work within and in collaboration with the United Nations General Assembly.

History of the Problem

There were several long-term reasons that fuelled the Syrian conflict, such as political repression, drought, economic problems, high levels of corruption, state violence, and strict censorship. Under the influence of the events of Arab Spring, in March 2011, pro-democratic protests broke out in Syria, after 15 teenage boys were arrested and tortured because of graffiti spray-painted revolutionary slogans on a high school wall. The unrest triggered nationwide protests demanding President Assad's resignation. The government's use of force to crush the dissent merely hardened the protesters' resolve. By July 2011, hundreds of thousands were taking to the streets across the country. Opposition supporters eventually began to take up arms, first to defend themselves and later to expel security forces from their local areas.

The violence escalated and the country descended into civil war as rebel brigades were formed to battle government forces for control of cities, towns, and the countryside. Fighting reached the capital Damascus and the second city of Aleppo in 2012. By June 2013, the UN said 90,000 people had been killed in the conflict. The rise of radical jihadist groups (Sunni majority against the president's Shia Alawite sect) drew the neighboring states and world powers to interfere too. As the issue remains without a resolution, Syrians involved in the conflict claim that it has become more radicalized – Muslim jihadists and groups of fighters from Al Qaeda have been demanding a say in leading the resistance. ISIS has also invaded Syria with the aim of establishing the Islamic state on its territory. All this violence and intervention escalated the

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civil war. The most alarming is, however, that the weapons are used against civilians. Innocent men are killed or beheaded, while women are being kidnapped and raped. According to the UN activists the number of casualties of the conflict had reached 250,000 in August 2015.

Parties to the conflict continued to commit with impunity serious violations of international humanitarian law, including war crimes, crimes against humanity and other gross human rights abuses. Government forces carried out direct attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and gas facilities, and indiscriminate attacks through aerial bombing and artillery shelling in Idlib governorate and western Aleppo countryside. They also besieged civilians in southern Syria and restricted and denied civilian access to humanitarian aid across the country. Security forces arbitrarily subjected refugees returning to their homes to unlawful detention, torture and other ill-treatment, and enforced disappearance. Government authorities continued to arbitrarily detain tens of thousands of people, including peaceful activists, humanitarian workers, lawyers and journalists, subjecting many to enforced disappearance. The Syrian National Army (SNA), supported by Turkey, continued to subject civilians in the northern cities of Afrin and Ras al-Ayn to arbitrary detention, torture and other ill-treatment, and abduction. In the north-east, the Autonomous Administration led by the Democratic Union Party (PYD) arbitrarily detained children in al-Hol camp and transferred them to prisons where they were detained with adults. In the north-west, the opposition armed group Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham arbitrarily detained and harassed activists and journalists. The government failed to provide a robust response to curb the spread of Covid-19 and blocked access to medical care for thousands in the south and north-east Syria. Tens of thousands of internally displaced people were at risk of contracting Covid-19 due to dire living conditions. Some European countries investigated and prosecuted individuals suspected of committing crimes under international law in Syria through their national courts under the principle of "universal jurisdiction". The death penalty remained in force and executions were reported.

More than 6.6 million people are considered to be internally displaced in Syria; 5 million civilians struggle to survive in besieged cities and hard-to-reach areas, being threatened to lose grave protection. More than 190,000 people have been 68 already killed, with both sides of the conflict responsible for civilian deaths. 11.6 million people, a number which represents more than half Syrian population before the conflict erupted, have been forced to flee their homes, desperately seeking a secure livelihood. Approximately 4 million people, 1.7 million of whom – are children, are refugees. They are mostly settling in five countries only: Egypt, Jordan, Iraq,

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Lebanon, and Turkey – nations, which face enormous challenges and struggle to cope with the crisis. Aleppo, One of the most ancient cities in the world, which served as a home for 2.1 million people, representing the largest Syrian city in the pre-conflict period, was divided between the government of Syria and armed opposition groups. Within 4 years only, in the time period of July 2012 to December 2016, Aleppo was ruined by daily fighting, intense cruelty, and systematic bombardment from both air-to-ground munitions and ground-launched artillery shells⁸. Moreover, it was further exposed to the massive use of heavy explosive weapons in populated neighborhoods. Thousands of people have fallen dead while many more were left with severe injuries. Fundamental infrastructural structures such as electricity, water supplies, hospitals, health-care facilities, as well as mosques, markets, residential houses, and schools, were shattered. Other urban areas met the same fate - a sorrowful scenario of fatal destruction. Following the escalation of violence, the humanitarian workforce strived to address civilians' perilously expanding needs, taking into consideration the limitations imposed upon the entrance of humanitarian relief. The United Nations Human Rights Council, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and other humanitarian organizations have continuously warned about the unceasing worsening of the humanitarian situation and the urgency of immediate humanitarian response.

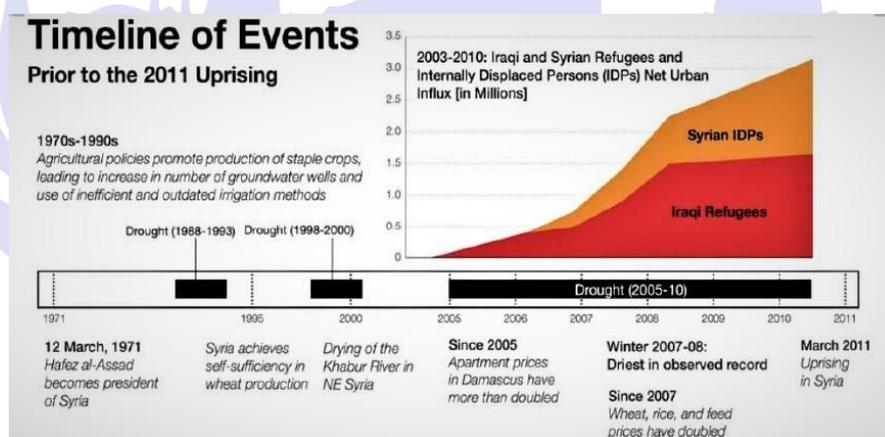


Figure 1: Timeline of Events (Prior to the 2011 Uprising) *The image depicts the situation in Syria before the crisis in 2011 throwing light upon major food security challenges even before the conflict.*

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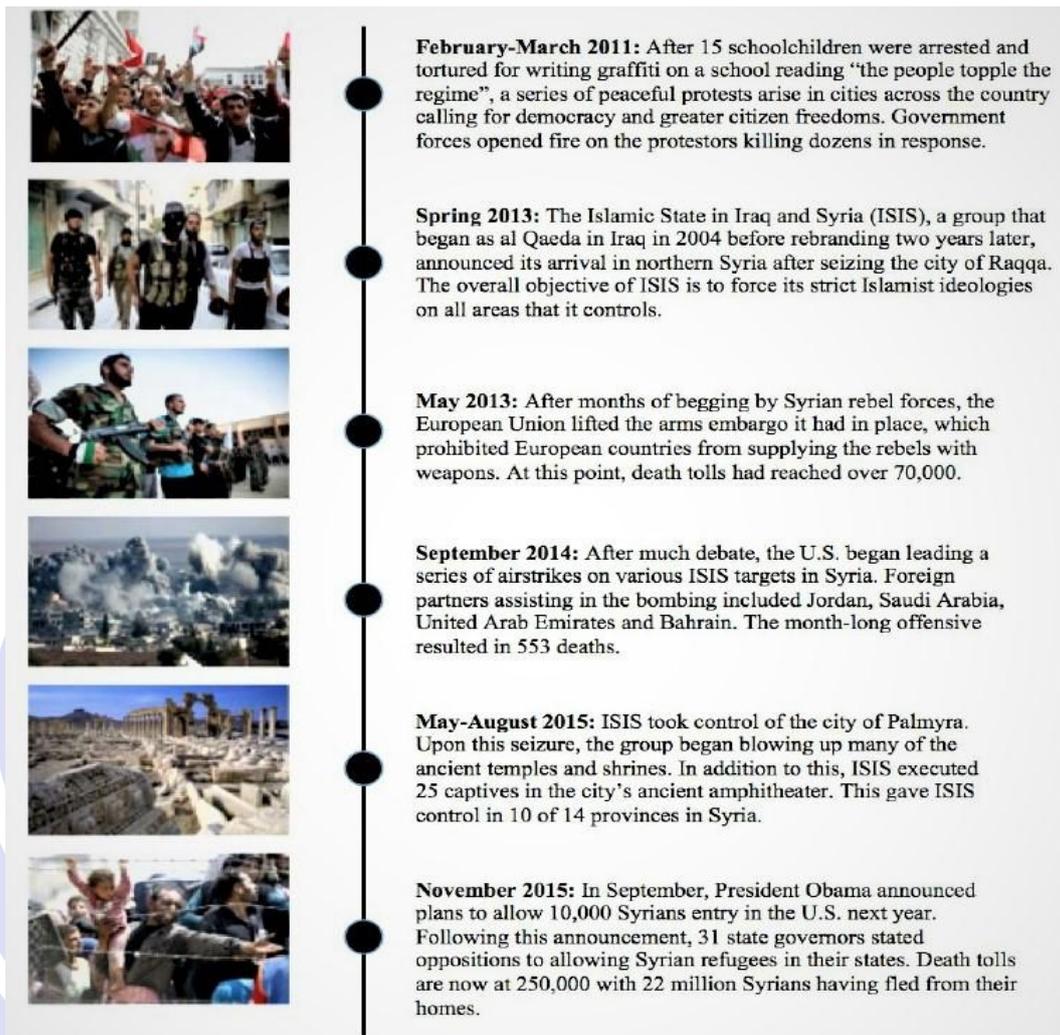


Figure 2: Timeline of Conflict in Syria 2011- 2015 (Major events that led to the present perilous human rights situation in Syria)

(Photo by: (from top to bottom) Louai Beshara/AFP/Getty Images, Reuters/Malek, Alshemali, Getty Images, Peter Rayner/Axiom/Zuma Press, Umit Bektas/Reuters)

Major Challenges

1. Involvement of Multiple Parties and Perceptions

Currently, Syria is witnessing the most intense battles the international community has seen since the beginning of the war in 2011. One of the main reasons why the conflict in Syria is ongoing is the difference in the perception of the parties involved. For instance, even though the United States and Russia have been trying to create a comprehensive plan for the future development of negotiations and the structure of Syrian politics, they were not able to come to an effective conclusion. Despite the countries being on different spectrums of political support for the battling parties, the situation is worsened by mutual mistrust and confrontation, especially in the recent events of the Ukrainian conflict. In addition to this, the US encounters an important strategic challenge: its allies - Turkey and Kurdish groups - are fighting against each other on the Syrian ground. Furthermore, the parties involved have different perspectives and vocabulary for defining the terrorist groups as well as the vision of the enemy which leads to the vicious circle of fighting among the groups rather than a unified approach to eliminate the common enemy and bring stability to the war-torn country. The major parties involved are:

- **The Syrian government and its Russian allies** have been accused of the usage of indiscriminate weapons, specifically barrel bombs and cluster munitions, against civilians. They were purposely directed at humanitarian assistance, medical facilities, and schools. Devastating sieges followed by attacks and intense violence have been targeted at the opposition-held civilian population; The most abominable peak of the Syrian Civil War was the use of chemical weapons in populated areas. As a result of the regime, thousands of people have been unjustifiably detained, tortured, and assassinated.
- **Armed Syrian opposition groups** have also been accused of the use of indiscriminate attacks on civilians as well as besieged areas, which were controlled by the government: once again people had to skirmish deprivation of food and health assistance. In addition to this, the reports have stated that opposition armed groups have unlawfully detained civilians and publicly performed summary executions.
- **The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)** executed suicide bombings in neighborhoods with high population density. Furthermore, they implemented tough religious rules in the controlled areas: those who disobeyed were punished or

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condemned to the death penalty. Moreover, they actively participated in the transfer of women and young girls who were mostly subjected to sexual violence. Also, ISIS is responsible for the destruction of significant historic cultural sites, particularly Palmyra.

- **Kurdish groups** enforced mass displacements of Syrian people, annihilating civilian households. The Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) has also involuntarily recruited boys and men to fight in its ranks.
- **The international coalition**, led by the United States, has killed civilians in its airstrikes. The air strikes campaign started in September 2014 and targeted 72 against both ISIS and certain armed groups, located mostly in eastern and northern Syria. Some of the air strikes were indiscriminate and disproportionate, thus it resulted in injuries and deaths among civilians: air strikes near Manbij consequently murdered 73 civilians at al-Tukhar and later killed 28 civilians at al-Ghandoura. The international coalition has admitted the death of 24 people, yet stated that the air strikes and their consequences adhered to the law of armed conflict
- **Turkish forces** – Turkey used both air and ground attacks in northern Syria. They were directed at the ISIL and Kurdish armed groups. The strikes have resulted in 24 civilian deaths close to Suraysat.

2. Denial of Humanitarian Access

The government forces besieged civilians and blocked their access to food, water, and essential services, and continued to impede access to UN humanitarian agencies in the south and north. Between 24 June and mid-September, the government besieged thousands of civilians in Daraa al-Balad to pressure armed opposition forces to surrender and evacuate. Throughout the siege, government forces prevented humanitarian organizations from delivering food, medical supplies, and other life-saving aid. A resident said that the only bakery in the neighbourhood had stopped working after the flour ran out and there was no access to food, electricity and enough water for more than 60 days.

The government continued to block UN aid to Rukban camp in the isolated area between the Syrian and Jordanian borders known as “the berm”, where tens of thousands of people still lived in harsh conditions without access to healthcare, sanitation, or clean water. The government denied UN agencies access to Menbij and Kobani, towns in north-east Syria, forcing residents

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to rely mainly on support from international humanitarian organizations and the Autonomous Administration, which were unable to meet their needs.

On 9 July, the UN Security Council conditionally renewed for six months the authorization of Bab al-Hawa crossing point for the delivery of UN humanitarian aid from Turkey to north-west Syria. The closure of the al-Yarubiyah border crossing in 2020, which ended the UN delivery of aid from Iraq, exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in northeast Syria. Due to the government's bureaucratic impediments and restrictions on access, UN agencies and their implementing partners could not deliver enough aid, especially medical aid.

3. Migration to Neighboring Countries and Refugee Camp Settings

Due to the Syrian crisis, more than 4 million people were forced to flee their country and more than 7.6 million were internally displaced. 95% of Syrian refugees are located in the neighboring states – Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey. Besides the fact that the demographics and economies of these countries have been altered, they are also struggling to provide basic food and shelter due to funding shortages. In Lebanon, for example, there are no official camps, so the refugees are forced to live in a sub-standard shelters, such as garages and tents. In Turkey, a high amount of child refugees have not received any education for the last years, therefore the European Commission has allocated humanitarian funding in Turkey which now enables 7000 Syrian children a proper education. Altogether, more than €4.2 billion have been mobilized to help displaced Syrians in their own country as well as to refugees and their host communities in the neighboring countries. However, this gesture of solidarity did not solve the long-term problems of these countries, as the refugees are still living in extensive refugee camps, which is only temporary shelter.

The Gulf States – UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain have provided hundreds of millions of dollars to support refugees in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan. Yet, so far, they refuse to open their own borders and welcome the refugees. When accused of not taking action, the leaders have been defending themselves by the number of work visas they have given the Syrians so far - in the UAE hundred thousand Syrians, and in Saudi Arabia, 2.5 million Syrians have come on work visas. This, however, is not a long-term solution for Syrians. Although they

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can come and work in these countries, if they lose their job, or they want to retire, they are going to be sent back home.

- **Perilous Refugee Camp Settings**

The health and nutrition-related problems refugees usually encounter in camps include communicable and non-communicable diseases, malnutrition, low immunization coverage, mental illness, and a lack of access to reproductive health care. The situation differs depending on the country hosting the camp as primary health care is granted by national health systems in Iraq and Turkey, and by the RRP in Jordan. Therefore, the challenges and priorities differ as well. In Iraq, for instance, the limitation in financial and human resources represents the main obstacles to potentially impact the health and nutrition sector. However, certain policies and objectives are common to these three countries, such as to improve equitable access, quality and coverage to comprehensive primary health care for Syrian refugee women, girls, boys and men, and support the capacity of the national health care system to provide health and nutrition services. The challenges met with water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) stem from pre-existing problems in the host countries, namely water shortages due partly to extreme climate, and inadequate water and waste treatment. These shortcomings may have negative effects on various sectors such as food production and livestock, with the potential to ultimately decrease informal employment in the abovementioned sectors. In Jordan, camps are faced with added challenges arising from an increase in water-demanding devices, and the cost of water trucking and desludging. In Iraqi camps, some of the measures undertaken to improve WASH are implemented through community mobilization to facilitate greater ownership of resources.

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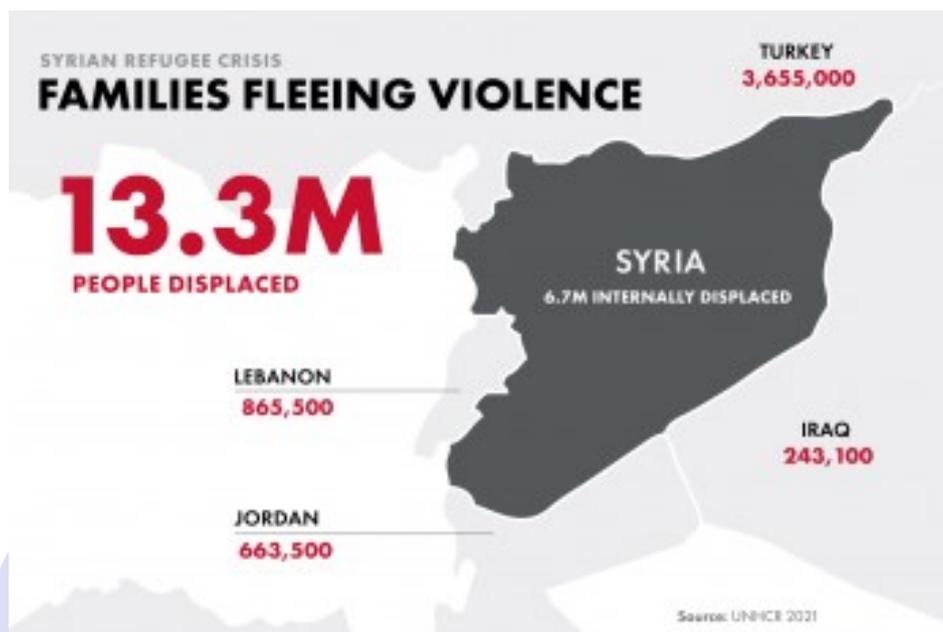


Figure 3: The number of refugees from Syria to neighboring nations as of 2021.

(Source: UNHCR 2021, <https://www.mercycorps.org/blog/quick-facts-syria-crisis>)

4. Arbitrary Detention and Enforced Disappearances

- **Syrian Government**

The government continued to subject tens of thousands of people, including journalists, human rights defenders, lawyers and political activists, to enforced disappearance, many for up to 10 years. Between January and April, the government arbitrarily arrested 400 individuals, including judges, lawyers, journalists and public sector employees, for their online criticism of the government's handling of the economic crisis. In a rare move, on 11 May, two weeks ahead of the presidential election, the government released them.

Government forces subjected refugees, including children, who returned to Syria between mid-2017 and April 2021, to arbitrary detention; torture and other ill-treatment, including rape and other sexual violence; and enforced disappearance – and interrogated them in connection with their perceived opposition to the government. Five refugees subjected to enforced disappearance died in detention.

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- **SNA**

The SNA, a pro-Turkey coalition of armed groups, continued to commit a range of abuses against civilians, predominately Syrian Kurds, in Afrin and Ras al-Ayn. The abuses included arbitrary detention, abduction, torture, and other ill-treatment. According to the UN Commission of Inquiry, the SNA tortured detainees during interrogation to extract “confessions”. Detainees were also denied legal representation and access to their families while held in informal detention centers.

- **PYD-led Autonomous Administration**

The Autonomous Administration continued to hold tens of thousands of people suspected of affiliation to the Islamic State armed group, including children, in the al-Hol camp in squalid conditions and without access to due process. Women and children in the annex of the al-Hol camp, where third-country nationals were held, were denied freedom of movement. This impacted their access to healthcare in the camp due to multiple checkpoints and security checks by the Asayish, the Autonomous Administration’s police force.

The Asayish arbitrarily detained boys as young as 12 in the annex, separating them from their mothers and caregivers, solely on suspicion of the boys’ potential future “radicalization” and without any evidence of wrongdoing. The Asayish transferred the boys to detention centres described as “rehabilitation centres” outside al-Hol camp, which lacked adequate access to food, water and healthcare and where diseases such as tuberculosis and scabies were rampant.

5. Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

Following the discussion on the actions of ISIS, the independent Commission of Inquiry has concluded that thousands of women and girls were coercively relocated from Syria to Iraq by the ISIS forces. In fact, in December 2014, ISIS issued specific guidelines on how to abduct girls and women and sexually assault them. De facto, ISIS subjects Syrian girls to virginity tests before selling them in the “slave bazaars” and trafficking them to various countries for sexual slavery. In Iraq, transferred women and girls were sold on the markets and forced into slavery, including sexual slavery. Numerous deported women and girls were exposed to continuous sexual violence, specifically rape and torture. ISIS persists in forcing Syrian girls and women into marriage with its own fighters, either for domestic or military exploitation. Moreover, it

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uses women and girls, who come from minority groups, for domestic servitude, systematic rape, and sexual abuse. Those, who attempted to escape, were subjected to gang rape and other forms of inhumane torture. Furthermore, children of such sexual slaves are usually killed.

6. Challenges in Providing Humanitarian Assistance

The main challenge to humanitarian assistance in the Syrian Arab Republic is the governmental denial of humanitarian access. The siege has resulted in severe restrictions on the movement of humanitarian aid throughout the territory. The most affected territories include Eastern Ghouta, Mouadhamiyah al-Sham, Madaya, Daraya, and, in light of the recent developments, eastern Aleppo. The government strongly restricts access to humanitarian convoys, destroys aid lorries, and bombs hospitals and other medical facilities. The consequences of the siege are frightening: the civilian population has to battle starvation, lack of health assistance and basic services, and being hunted by air strikes and artillery shelling at the same time. In Homs city, a three-year-old boy died as a result of the governmental restrictions on the ability to leave the area for medical assistance. On May 12, 2016, the Syrian government imposed last-minute restrictions on United Nations humanitarian aid delivery to enter Darayya - a suburb of Damascus - where 4000 civilians were deprived from food supplies, medical assistance and other basic supplies and services.

It is also crucial to realize that the Syrian Civil War is one of the most precarious conflicts for workers of humanitarian assistance. In fact, it already resulted in the loss of lives of 63 Syrian Arab Red Crescent staff and volunteers, 10 of whom were killed while fulfilling their duty on the ground, mostly in cities of Aleppo and Homs. Numerous humanitarian workers and volunteers have also been injured or executed while attempting to reinforce essential services or save others from danger. The attacks on humanitarian workers and medical facilities inflamed the discussion around the issue and stimulated the United Nations Security Council to adopt Resolution 2286 on 3 May 2016. It strongly condemns the attacks and extreme violence against medical personnel and calls upon all parties to protect medical and humanitarian facilities and personnel.

7. Challenges due to COVID-19

The pandemic has presented challenges to each and every country around the world. For Syria, the magnitude of these challenges may be just beginning to be felt.

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In the northwest, the first cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in July 2020. Home to more than 4 million people, many of whom have been displaced multiple times, Idlib and northern Aleppo governorates are now facing the catastrophic impacts of the virus. Many families live in squalid makeshift overcrowded camps or sleep out in the open. Water is scarce here, and the health and civilian infrastructures are decimated. According to the World Health Organization, only half of the health facilities in this region are still open and operational.

In the northeast, the first cases of COVID-19 were confirmed in April 2020, and concerns over a lack of preparedness remain high. Lack of COVID-19 testing capacity chronically understocked health facilities, and inefficient water services continue to be the daily reality. Like in the northwest, taking measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus is especially difficult in the many overcrowded camps and informal settlements across the region.

In government-held areas, as in neighboring countries hosting refugees, Syrians are facing the reality that the threat of COVID-19, the inability to work, and the spiraling economic decline in the region are making their situation harder than ever.

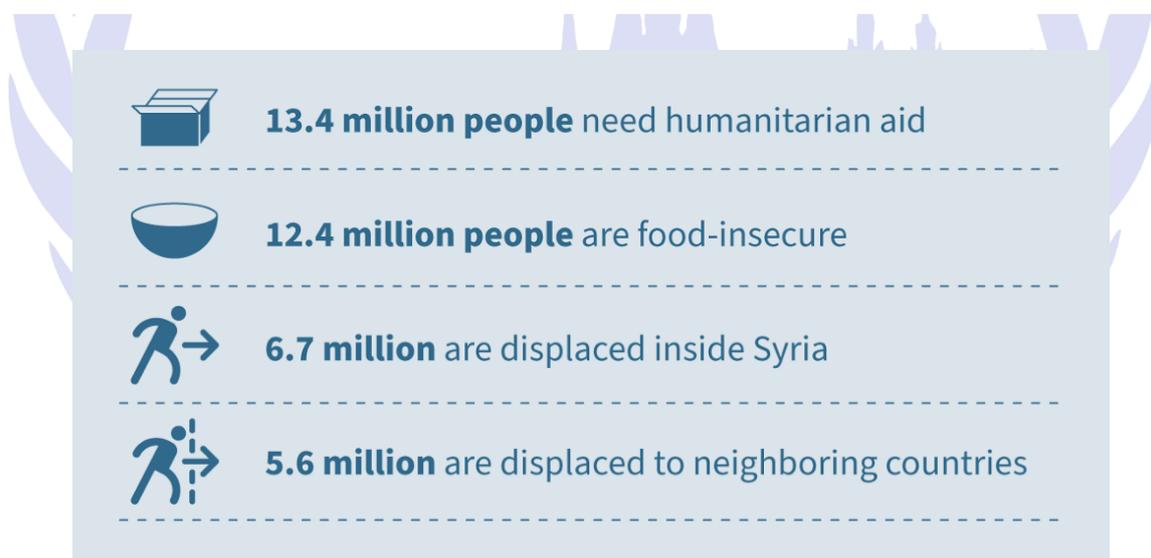


Figure 4: USAID Report 2021.

(Graphic: USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance)

Previous International Action

After over a year, the Security Council passed Resolution 2042 and Resolution 2043 in April 2012. These resolutions approved former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's role as Joint

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Special Envoy, a lead negotiator that worked for both the United Nations and the League of Arab States. Annan came up with six points known as the Annan Plan that would have President Assad leave power and a process to find a new leader of Syria. To support the Annan Plan and the ceasefire Assad agreed to under it, the Security Council put together the UN Supervisory Mission in Syria (UNSMIS). UNSMIS was to watch over the ceasefire and report any violence to the Council. Over three hundred observers were sent to Syria. The ceasefire lasted less than a week.

In 2015, the mandate of the UN Supervisory Mission in Syria was terminated. Apart from Security Council, the United Nations Human Rights Council, as well as the United Nations General Assembly, has considered possible solutions to the ongoing disaster. Repeatedly, they passed resolutions that would call for the elimination of violence in the region. One of the important developments was the establishment of The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic on August 22nd, 2011. It was established by the Human Rights Council through the adoption of the resolution S - 17/1 in order to investigate the violations of international human rights law and potentially identify those who are responsible for the violations. The Commission has issued over 20 reports, the latest being an Advance Edited Version of "the Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic".

The recent Human Rights Council resolution S - 25/1, passed on October 21st, 2016, demanded parties to the conflict immediately fulfill their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. It further called for the allowance of the safe access of United Nations humanitarian agencies and their partners to Syria. In addition, the resolution strongly condemned the terroristic attacks, violence, and starvation of civilians.

Moreover, the United Nations Human Rights Council issued reports regarding the humanitarian situation in Syria: evidence of the urgency of international action.

On 26 February 2016, the Security Council unanimously endorsed the cessation of hostilities agreement aimed at ending five years of bloodshed in Syria. The 15-member Council approved resolution 2268 (2016), endorsing the deal announced in the Joint Statement by the United States and the Russian Federation, Co-chairs of the International Syria Support Group. The resolution demanded that all parties to the agreement live up to its terms, and urged all Member

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States to use their influence to ensure that parties to the conflict fulfill their commitments and create the conditions for a durable and lasting ceasefire.

In addition to Human Rights Council, there are numerous agencies and organizations (ex. UNICEF, WHO, WFP, International Committee of the Red Cross, and so on) helping to diminish the results of the humanitarian catastrophe. Unfortunately, their work is mostly restricted and destroyed by deliberate attacks and continuous battles.

Involvement of Other International Actors

Despite the creation of an UN-facilitated constitutional committee, political negotiations remain at a virtual standstill. The committee, formed to bring Syrian parties together, was delayed in the meeting, is not fully representative, and has failed to show concrete results thus far.

Russia, Turkey, and Iran continue to wield influence in Syria, with Russia spearheading efforts to politically legitimize the Syrian government, including through its use of the veto in the UN Security Council. Turkey's influence is seen in areas under its direct control in Syria, as well as indirectly in Idlib governorate, where in March it negotiated a ceasefire with Russia that remains intact.

The US maintains its support for the anti-ISIS coalition operating in Syria and provides financial and logistical support to the Syrian Democratic Forces, as well as stabilization aid in the region.

In the UN Security Council, the US, and some European Council members have pushed for the reinstatement of the humanitarian cross-border mechanism and have supported accountability for violations in Syria. Russia has continued to use its veto power to eviscerate the cross-border aid mandate.

The European Union continued to condemn violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Syria and reiterated support for international accountability efforts. The EU hosted its fourth Brussels conference on Syria remotely, focusing on a political solution to the crisis and response to humanitarian needs.

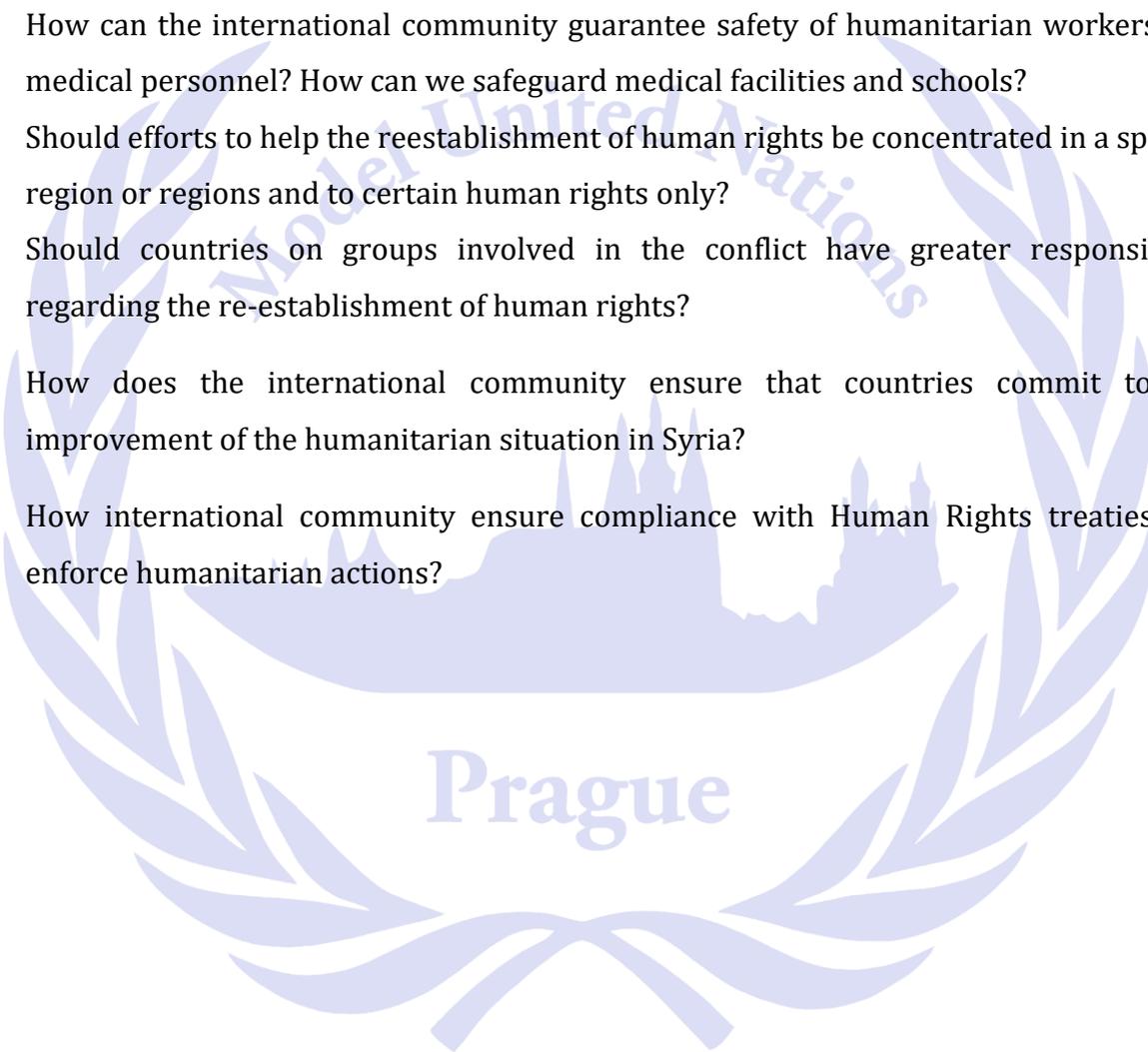
Both the EU and the US renewed and expanded sanctions on the Syrian government.

Questions A Resolution Must Answer

- Can the re-establishment of Human Rights happen in Syria as a tool for post-conflict situations?

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- How can the UNHRC help the other UN agencies assist in providing basic amenities to the civilians in Syria?
- What alternative approaches or solutions can be incorporated into existing documents to improve their effectiveness?
- What strategies can institutions at the non-governmental, national, regional, and international levels implement to help them better transition countries emerging from conflicts?
- How can the international community guarantee safety of humanitarian workers and medical personnel? How can we safeguard medical facilities and schools?
- Should efforts to help the reestablishment of human rights be concentrated in a specific region or regions and to certain human rights only?
- Should countries on groups involved in the conflict have greater responsibility regarding the re-establishment of human rights?
- How does the international community ensure that countries commit to the improvement of the humanitarian situation in Syria?
- How international community ensure compliance with Human Rights treaties and enforce humanitarian actions?



Prague

Prague Model United Nations

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Topic B: The Right to Peaceful Protesting in Iran

Introduction

The latest large-scale protests in Iran began on September 14, 2022, after the death of Mahsa Amini. Aged only 22, Mahsa Amini was an Iranian student who died 3 days after her arrest by the Iranian vice squad for not wearing her veil correctly. Even before her death, when she was in a coma, voices were raised to protest against the obligation to wear the veil in the country, and against the violence perpetrated by the morality police.

Today in Iran, it is forbidden for citizens to protest against the application of the laws, which is seen as an attack on the Islamic regime. Since mid-September, the Iranian authorities have been trying by all means to put an end to the demonstrations. This involves murderous repression, counter-demonstrations, or the blocking of Internet access preventing any denunciation of the authoritarianism of the regime. According to Iran Human Rights (IHR), an international human rights organization, the number of victims as of October 20 stands at more than 253, a figure which continues to rise and which perfectly illustrates the violence which prevail in the country.

“We are deeply disturbed by persistent reports of deliberate and unlawful use by Iranian security forces of live ammunition, pellets and buckshot against unarmed peaceful protesters, in violation of the principles of legality, precaution, necessity, non-discrimination and proportionality, applicable to the use of force”

- United Nations Group of Human Rights Experts

While these latest protests have caused a lot of noise and have made the international community react more than ever, it is important to note that they are closely linked to the Iranian revolution of 1976, which saw the overthrow of the imperial state of Iran. and the advent of the Islamic Republic. This will be the starting point of our issue at the PragueMUN 2023 Human Rights Council.

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History of the topic

It was in January 1978 that the situation began to generate and that we observed major protests against the regime of Shah Mohammad Reza, particularly from the moment when the Ettelaat newspaper published an editorial insulting Ruhollah Khomeini, a very respected cleric. Faced with this, several thousand Iranian citizens attacked the symbols of the monarchy, which resulted in heavy clashes with the police in the conservative city of Qom. The reasons for this opposition lie in the brutality of the monarchy, its strong repression and its lack of popular support. While leftists demanded a more democratic government, conservatives opposed the rapid westernization and secularism of the monarchy. Clearly, the regime of Shah Mohammad Reza was unpopular on all fronts, especially since the country was then experiencing high unemployment and high inflation following the economic collapse of 1977.

Later, tensions escalate and spread throughout the country. We particularly remember September 8, 1978, also called "Black Friday", when the regime imposed martial law and when the security forces opened fire on demonstrators, killing more than 100 people. Fearing for their safety, the Shah and his family fled the country for Egypt in January 1979. After that, Khomeini returned from exile and took control of the government after a referendum that established the Islamic Republic on April 1, 1979.

But quickly, the Khomeini regime took drastic measures. On July 8, 1999, students from the University of Tehran gathered to protest against the closure of a popular reformist newspaper Salaam. They see in this a will of the regime to control the media, and initially wish to demonstrate peacefully. However, law enforcement raided a University dormitory and riot police beat students with batons and set fire to several rooms, killing at least one. The police arrested more than 1,500 demonstrators, and this event can be seen as a first attempt to ban demonstrations. More than 10,000 protesters joined the movement, and although they vindicated Mohammad Khatami (then president) and his reformist political faction, the latter seemed powerless to protect his base of supporters. The government finally cracked down on the protests on July 13, 1999 after a ban on gatherings was announced. In reality, if Khatami is considered the leader of the "reformers" in Iran, his will to advocate freedom of expression and tolerance is largely undermined as he fails to change institutions due to the Conservative Opposition in Parliament. On the other hand, these student demonstrations must be seen as the basis of what would later be called the "Green Movement".

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The green movement takes its name from a green belt given to Mir Hossein Mousavi by Mohammad Khatami. This movement reached its peak in 2009, when more than 3 million peaceful demonstrators took to the streets of Tehran to protest the claim that Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had won the 2009 presidential elections in a landslide victory. Among the slogans sung by the demonstrators, we remember “where is my vote?”. Quickly, the green movement grew from a massive group of voters into a national force for democratic rights, hijacked by radical clerics during the 1979 revolution. Demonstrations became more frequent, but were stopped by the regime that canceled all public demonstrations of opposition in early 2010. Indeed, after the presidential elections, riot police and paramilitary forces violently repressed demonstrations, bringing the number of demonstrators killed to 30, and 4000 the number of arrests.

Between 2010 and 2017, the economic crisis worsened, for obvious reasons. In December 2017, demonstrators took to the streets in Mashhad - Iran's second largest city - to protest government economic policies and high commodity and raw material prices. As in 2009, the protests spread rapidly, and were organized largely through social media messaging apps. They directly target Khamenei politics and the demonstrators had the slogan “death to the dictator!”. They were the most intense protests since of the green movement, but the difference is that they were largely disorganized and leaderless.

It is noted that each time demonstrations break out, the demonstrations are heavily sanctioned by the Iranian authorities. On November 15, 2019, Iran announced the increase in gasoline prices, up to 300%, and the introduction of a new rationing system with the aim of helping the poorest. But this attempt by the government fails as protests erupt in the oil-rich province of Khuzestan. Protesters reportedly chanted anti-government slogans, including “Shame Rouhani, leave the country alone!”. To quell these protests, the regime used tear gas, water cannons and live ammunition to disperse protesters. Also, the government almost completely shut down the internet for 5 days in order to prevent the spread of images of the demonstrations as well as to prevent the repression from spreading on social networks. These protests are taking on a considerable scale, and this is reflected in particular in the human toll. According to Amnesty International, at least 208 protesters were killed, and the Center for Human Rights in Iran estimated that 4,000 people were arrested. In total, this brings the number of people killed by the regime to more than 1,000.

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In January 2020, another event set fire to the powder when Ukraine International Airlines flight 752 was mistakenly shot down. All 176 people on board died, including dozens of Iranians. On January 11, 2020, Iranians launched anti-government protests after officials admitted that the Revolutionary Guards shot down this plane. Furious at the government for denying responsibility for three days, protesters gathered on university campuses shouting "Death to liars". Despite the deployment of riot police, Revolutionary Guards and plainclothes police, other regions are joining the movement. Once again, these demonstrations are considered illegal by the government, which however declares that "legal demonstrations" would be tolerated. However, the regime continues to limit journalists in their coverage of protests.

All these elements clearly illustrate the will of the Iranians to speak out against the government in place, but also how they are heavily sanctioned for what would nevertheless be a fundamental right. Since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, reprisals have followed each popular movement, plunging the country into total chaos and a great aversion of the populations towards the regime.

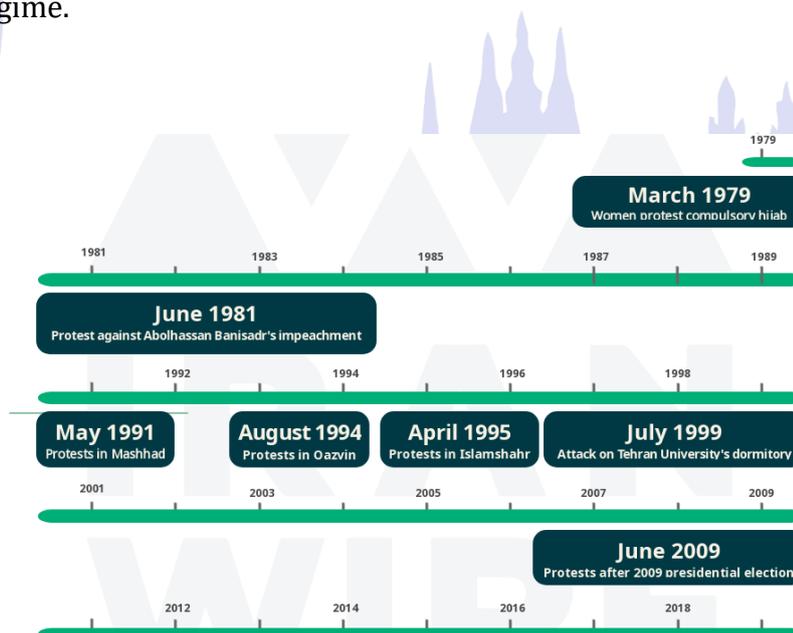


Figure 1 : Iranwire. "Did You Know? Timeline of Violent Suppression of Protests in Iran", 28 Nov. 2022.

Discussion on the issue and subtopics

1. Unprecedented Protests : Mahsa Amini

On September 13, while Mahsa Amini - a 22-year-old Iranian student - was visiting the capital with her family, she was arrested by agents of the Gasht-e Ershad, the vice police who terrify Iranian women on a daily basis. She was then taken away by the police because of her outfit deemed incompatible with the rules of the Islamic Republic - in this case a veil that was too loose - and died in circumstances that are still unclear to us today, after three days. detention and transfer to Kasra Hospital in downtown Tehran. Quickly, social networks are buzzing about this suspicious death, and demonstrators meet on the evening of November 16 near the hospital to denounce the version of the authorities. According to them, Mahsa Amini did not die of illness caused by heart failure as the police claim, but rather of beatings by her jailers, with photos of the young woman's swollen face as proof. taken from his hospital bed and relayed by journalist Niloofar Hamed, who was later arrested and thrown in prison.

The crisis takes on a whole new dimension the following day, when dozens of women take off their Islamic veils and wave them in the air during the funeral of Mahsa Amini, held on September 17 in Saghez, her hometown, in Iranian Kurdistan. The participants in the funeral, transformed into demonstrators, then head towards an official building with the cry of "Death to the dictator", before being dispersed by tear gas. On Sunday, September 18, the movement spreads and there are about fifteen gatherings in cities of Kurdistan but also in Tehran. In the days that followed, images of protests emerged from other cities further east, such as the very conservative Mashhad. We see women burning their veils and cutting their hair, repeating the slogan that then prevails: "Woman! Life! Freedom!" Islamic Republic: Visibly concerned about the scale of the protest movement, the country's authorities chose to restrict internet access on the night of September 21 to 22, in particular blocking the Instagram social network and WhatsApp messaging for several days But that does not prevent rallies from being held in a growing number of Iranian cities, such as Hamadan, Ilam, Qom or Tabriz, in the center and west of the country, or in Bandar Abbas, in the south. , the watchword is the same: demand more rights for women, but also more justice, the end of police violence or the fall of the Islamic Republic.

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Until then relatively silent on this subject, the Iranian President, Ebrahim Raïsi, hardened his tone on September 24 and promised to "deal once and for all" with the protesters, before summoning the police to act. more "firmly" against the demonstrators. Four days later, during an interview on state television, he blows hot and cold by promising a new investigation into the causes of Mahsa Amini's death, while coldly vowing to stem the "chaos" , as the BBC reports.

The repression is much more violent from September 30, when the police kill dozens of demonstrators in the province of Sistan-Baluchistan (southeast of the country). On October 2, scenes of panic were filmed near Sharif University in Tehran, as students were taken away, balaclavas over their heads, by police and armed men affiliated with the regime.

2. A long-lasting revolt

Totally silent since the start of the protest, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the country's supreme guide, speaks on October 3. He openly accuses the United States and Israel of remotely piloting what he describes as "riots" intended according to him to destabilize the Islamic Republic, reports Al Jazeera. Fixed to its positions, the regime sees new international sanctions rain down throughout October, such as those of the European Union against high-ranking officers of the morality police. The authorities are also facing a movement of stubborn strikes, particularly in the oil sector and in education.

October is also the month of commemorations, which in turn are violently repressed. Like the one organized two weeks after "Bloody Friday", which left 90 dead on September 30 in Zahedan, in the south-east of the country. On the occasion, also, of the end of religious mourning for Mahsa Amini, commemorated on October 26, forty days after his death. That day, the police opened fire in Saghez, denounced the Kurdish NGO Hengaw Organization for Human Rights, while thousands of people gathered in memory of Mahsa Amini.

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Figure 2 : Women cutting their hair in support to the protest (all images courtesy the unknown photographer)

No doubt to avoid the appearance of other martyrs of the movement, the authorities strictly control the funerals of protesters killed during the rallies. And do not hesitate to steal some remains to bury them out of sight, according to the BBC (article in Persian).

At the same time, the regime, supported by the Iranian Parliament, is deploying its judicial arsenal. Since mid-November, he has even threatened protesters with capital punishment. On November 13 and 15, two Iranians described as "rioters" and "terrorists" were sentenced to death. Decisions which, fear human rights defenders, could be repeated. According to a report published on November 12 by Iran Human Rights, an Oslo-based NGO, at least 326 protesters have been killed in Iran since the beginning of the movement. And more than 18,500 people were incarcerated, according to an estimate by the NGO HRANA (dated December 27, 2022), shared by the United Nations.

3. The end of the morality police

Iran's Attorney General Mohammad Jafar Montazeri announced on Saturday that the morality police had been removed by the relevant authorities, according to the ISNA news agency on

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Sunday (December 4th). "The vice squad has nothing to do with the judiciary, and it was abolished by those who created it," he said Saturday night in the holy city of Qom.

This announcement came after the authorities decided to revise a 1983 law on compulsory veiling in Iran, imposed four years after the 1979 Islamic revolution. This stage by other Iranian power figures, and the modalities of its removal have not been explained – the controls of the strict dress code of the Islamic Republic to which women are subjected and whose agents are in charge could thus continue.

Literally meaning the "Islamic Guidance Patrol", this is the police force that arrested Mahsa Amini, accusing her of breaking the Islamic Republic's strict dress code.

The morality police had been created under the ultra-conservative President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, to "spread the culture of decency and the hijab". It was made up of men in green uniforms and women wearing the black chador, which covers the head and upper body. This unit began its patrols in 2006.

The role of the morality police has evolved over the years, but it has always been divisive, even among presidential candidates. Under moderate President Hassan Rohani, you could see women in tight jeans wearing colorful veils. But in July 2022, her successor, the ultra-conservative Ebrahim Raisi, called for the mobilization of "all institutions to strengthen the veil law", stating that "the enemies of Iran and Islam wanted to undermine the cultural and religious values of society by spreading corruption".

Women who violated the dress code of the Islamic Republic risked being picked up by this unit. Recently, the same prosecutor announced that "parliament and the judiciary are working" on the issue of compulsory veiling, without specifying what could be changed in the law. This is a very sensitive issue in Iran, on which two camps clash: that of the conservatives, who are bracing themselves on the 1983 law, and that of the progressives, who want to give women the right to choose. to wear it or not.

According to the law in force since 1983, Iranian and foreign women, regardless of their religion, must wear a veil and loose clothing in public. Since Mahsa Amini's death and the protests that followed, a growing number of women have been uncovering their heads, especially in northern Tehran. On September 24, a week after the protests began, Iran's main reform party urged the state to rescind the veil requirement.

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4. What is Peaceful Protest ?

Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly. This includes the right to hold meetings, sit-ins, strikes, rallies, events or demonstrations. International law guarantees and supports the exercise of these freedoms, which forms the basis for participation in peaceful protests. This concerns in particular the rights to freedom of expression and participation in the conduct of public affairs.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (and by definition the Human Rights Council), has the mandate to protect and promote these freedoms.

That means :

- Monitoring, reporting and conducting advocacy regarding measures taken for the management of protests, including examining the impact of use of force and human rights violations in State responses;
- Working on early warning and prevention of violations of the right and regarding economic, social and cultural rights underlying protests;
- Engaging in dialogue with Governments and civil society, including protestors and law enforcement officials, and providing technical assistance to:
 - Seek to prevent and address the human rights violations occurred in the context of protests and ensure accountability; and
 - Encourage national authorities to address the root causes of protests, for example by encouraging dialogue and enhancing a participatory approach to decision-making.
- In some countries, OHCHR has also been involved in protection, including by its presence, at demonstrations or by following up on cases of individuals arrested in relation to protests, detained and sometimes ill-treated.

The right to peaceful assembly is a fundamental human right that allows individuals to express themselves collectively and help shape the society in which they live. It is important in itself, because it protects the ability of everyone to exercise their autonomy while being supportive of others. Together with other related rights, it forms the very foundation of participatory

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governance systems based on democracy, human rights, the rule of law and pluralism. Peaceful assemblies can play a vital role in allowing those who participate in them to put forward ideas and aspirations in the public sphere and to determine the degree of support or opposition they generate. When used to voice grievances, peaceful assemblies can be an opportunity to resolve differences by involving and involving all parties in a peaceful manner.

The right to peaceful assembly protects the non-violent gathering of people for specific purposes, primarily for the expression of opinions. It is an individual right that is exercised collectively. It therefore intrinsically presupposes the association of several individuals.

Everyone has the right to assemble peacefully: citizens and non-citizens alike. This right can be exercised, for example, by foreign nationals, migrants (including undocumented migrants), asylum seekers, refugees and stateless persons.

In many cases, peaceful assemblies have an uncontroversial purpose and cause little or no disruption. The purpose can be, for example, to mark a national day or to celebrate the result of a sporting event. However, peaceful assemblies can sometimes be used to pursue controversial ideas or goals. Their scale or nature can cause disruption, for example impeding vehicular or pedestrian traffic or hampering economic activity. These consequences, whether intentional or unintended, do not call into question the protection enjoyed by these gatherings.

The recognition of the right of peaceful assembly imposes on States parties the correlative obligation to respect and guarantee the exercise of this right without discrimination. This assumes that States allow such meetings to take place without undue interference and that they facilitate the exercise of the right and protect the participants. The second sentence of Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights sets out the grounds on which restrictions may be imposed, but such restrictions must be narrowly defined.

In addition, states parties have a positive obligation to facilitate peaceful assemblies and enable participants to achieve their objectives. States must therefore promote an environment conducive to the exercise of the right to peaceful assembly without discrimination and put in place a legal and institutional framework in which this right can be exercised effectively. In some cases, the authorities may have to take specific measures. They may, for example, be required to block streets, divert traffic or ensure security. Where necessary, States must also protect participants from certain abuses that may be committed by non-State actors, such as

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interventions or acts of violence by other members of the public, counter-protesters or service providers, private security.

On April 4, 1968, the Imperial State of Iran (the political regime of Iran between 1925 and 1979) signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the latter was ratified on June 24, 1975. However, we understand that things have since evolved, and that the rules set out above are not applied by the Islamic Republic.

5. Following the announcement of the end of the morality police, is the fight over ?

Iran carried out the first known execution of a prisoner arrested during months-long protests, state media reported, a major escalation that sent shockwaves across the country and which, according to rights groups, could signal an even bloodier phase of the violent crackdown on the nationwide uprising.

The prisoner - identified by Mizan, the country's justice news site, as Mohsen Shekari - was found guilty of "war against God" on November 20 and sentenced to death by Tehran's Revolutionary Court. Authorities accused him of repeatedly attacking a paramilitary guard with a knife and disturbing public order by blocking a thoroughfare in Iran's capital Tehran during a protest in late September.

"Iranian authorities have executed a protester, sentenced to death in show trials without any due process," tweeted Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam, director of Norwegian group Iran Human Rights.

The execution follows a three-day nationwide strike in support of protests that have been the country's largest in decades and has increased pressure on authorities to respond to the unrest they seem unable to, until now to contain.

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Figure 3 : Artwork representing Mahsa Amini : Artwork by Sahar Goreshi (all images courtesy the artists)

The militant HRANA news agency estimates that more than 400 civilians have been killed and some 18,000 arrested during nearly three months of protests. Alongside Tehran's ongoing campaigns of violence and intimidation, including military-style assaults on Kurdish areas, since mid-November Iranian authorities have sentenced at least a dozen people to death for crimes that allegedly committed during protests, say human rights groups. More people are being charged with capital crimes and face the death penalty if convicted.

Exact numbers are difficult to determine, as Iranian authorities often do not release details of the status of detainees, have blocked and restricted communication networks and threatened the families of arrested and deceased protesters not to speak out. Political prisoners are usually tried by Revolutionary Courts, a parallel legal system designed to protect the Iranian regime, resulting in a court system stacked against protesters and little expectation of a fair trial or due

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process. . Trials often rely on fabricated evidence, and defendants are often tortured or coerced into making confessions and incriminating statements, as rights groups such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

These days, many Iranians are waking up in fear to check if new executions have taken place. In Iran, they are organized during the morning prayer, a little before sunrise. In the early hours of the day, 23-year-old Mohsen Shekari and Majidreza Rahnavard were hanged on December 8 and 12 respectively. According to the judiciary, 11 people have so far been sentenced to death in connection with the protests. Activists say a dozen more could suffer the same fate. Finally, according to the London-based human rights group Amnesty International, Iran is the second country behind China to apply the death penalty, with at least 314 people executed in 2021.

Previous International actions

1. Under American pressure, the UN expels Iran from a commission on women

Following an American diplomatic offensive, the UN recently expelled Iran from a commission on women's rights. This is a historic international sanction against the Islamic Republic's strong crackdown on protests since September.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), meeting at its headquarters in New York, has voted to "withdraw" with "immediate effect" Iran from the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

ECOSOC, which oversees the CSW, voted 29 votes in favor, 8 against and 16 abstentions in order to "exit" Tehran from this body for the remainder of its term until 2026.

The decision was taken following the adoption of a resolution submitted by the United States – which has had no diplomatic relations with Iran since 1980 – and which was supported by an international petition of several dozen thousands of signatories.

This new UN text "expresses serious concern about the actions of the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran since September 2022, which has continuously undermined and increasingly

Prague Model United Nations

suppressed the rights of women and girls, including the right to freedom of expression and opinion, often with excessive use of force”.

The White House, through National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, hailed “a historic vote [...] in response to the Iranian regime’s systemic repression of women and girls.” He said “the United States is working with allies and partners around the world to hold Iran to account for abuses against its people, including peaceful protesters, women, and girls.”

Presidential adviser Joe Biden took the opportunity to denounce in a statement the “violence” of the Iranian regime, which supports Russia “against the Ukrainian people as well as its destabilizing actions in the Middle East”, in reference to indirect conflicts and rivalries for decades between the Shia Islamic Republic, Israel and the Sunni Arab powers of the Gulf.

The same type of reaction can be observed on the side of the United Kingdom. “A regime that brutally suppresses Iranian women and girls has no place in the [UN] commission,” said James Cleverly, UK Foreign Secretary

2. Insufficient measures according to Human Rights Watch

However, we note that apart from the speeches mentioned above, and the dozens of resolutions voted on at the UN, no concrete action has been taken in recent years in favor of the defense of the rights of the Man and more particularly of the freedom of peaceful demonstration.

In mid-November 2018, the United Nations General Assembly Human Rights Committee approved a resolution against the Iranian government's continued discrimination against women and the limitation of freedom of thought.

In late November 2018, a group of UN human rights experts, including Javid Rehman, UN special rapporteur on human rights in Iran, and four other experts raised their concerns. about Farhad Meysami, who has been on hunger strike since August. He is in prison for opposing the compulsory wearing of the hijab.

On the side of human rights organizations, such as the American NGO Human Rights Watch (HRW), the response of the United Nations is however very far from the mark.

Prague Model United Nations

For HRW, the international community must "urgently exert coordinated pressure on Iran to end its campaign of violence and for credible prosecution of those directly responsible for these appalling human rights violations, as well as an end to the serious discrimination against women".

Questions A Resolution Must Answer

- What are the tools available to the UN Human Rights Council to respond to the problem?
- Are the efforts made by the international community sufficient ?
- What role can non-sovereign actors play ? Exemple : NGOs, IGOs, advocacy groups ?
- Should we consider a humanitarian intervention with regard to our Responsibility to Protect?
- Is the definition of peaceful protest provided by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights satisfactory or does it require a more restrictive revision ?
- How can the international community help political prisoners facing execution in Iran ?
- What other rights underlying the freedom of peaceful protest are under threat, and what actions can the Human Rights Council take ?
- What sanctions are applicable to the Islamic Republic of Iran and which institutions can we turn to ?

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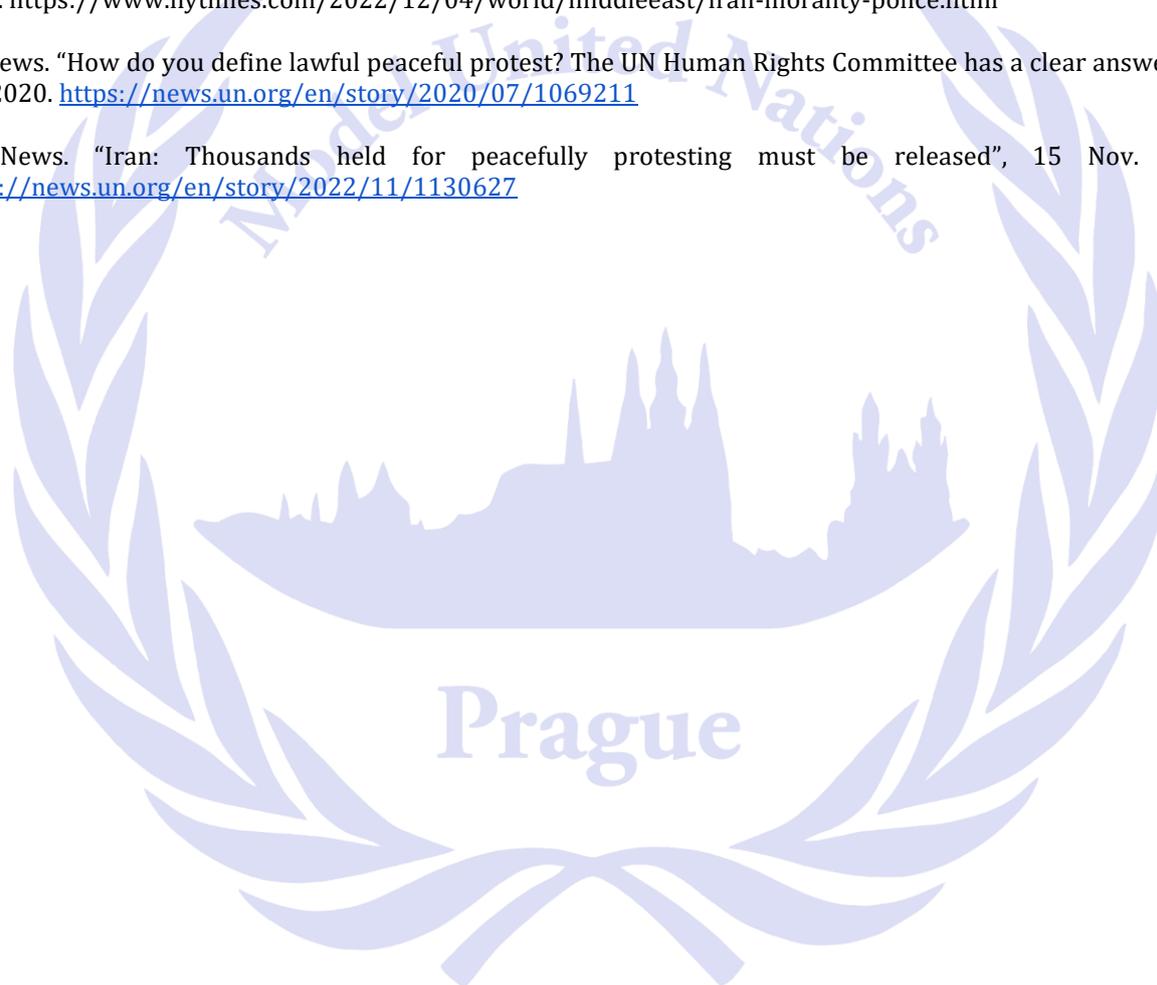
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