



PragueMUN 2023

Through Hardships to Peace



STUDY GUIDE

SECURITY COUNCIL

It's time to be UNique!

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Letter of Welcome

Dear Delegates,

I am ecstatic to welcome you to the 2023 edition of PragueMUN. My name is Maria Ramirez, and I am honored to serve as your United Nations Security Council Chair. I look forward to facilitating conversation and debate throughout the conference. First, thank you for being part of this committee. It will be an incredible and insightful conference with all of your contributions. For a little about myself, I'm from Colombia and doing my master's degree in France. I'm studying international and comparative business law. I started the world of MUN in 2016 when I was in high school as a delegate. Soon after, I was part of the Committee Team and as a chair for two years. Then during my bachelor's degree, I was the AUSG committee for the Lyon MUN for two years. During that time, I was also chair for several conferences, and it's truly one of my passions. MUN has a special place in my heart not only because of its educational aspects but also because I have made some fantastic friendships. Outside of MUN, I participated in a law association that gives free law advice to people who need it. I also love practicing Taekwondo, reading a book, or playing video games in my free time.

This upcoming conference will be my first time chairing a UNSC committee, and I am looking forward to the new experience. The two topics of our committee are contemporary situations, which lead the delegates to propose solutions and reflect on the best way to help these countries that haven't found their way out of an unstable situation. Both have a long history of conflict, political instability, and authoritarian rule that have led the countries to a humanitarian crisis. As you may know, the Security Council was created to maintain world peace. As such, you will need to give a diplomatic and insightful answer regarding the topic you choose in committee. The history and current situation surrounding both conflicts are rich and complex. Delegates should come together with a thorough understanding of why Myanmar and the Republic Democratic of Congo are where they are and what it will take to bring these two countries to a more stable situation, which are the limitations of the Security Council. I look forward to a week of substantive debate with plenty of fun and excitement! Best of luck in your preparation for the conference; I'm excited to meet you! Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions that you may have. See you in Prague!

Sincerely,

Maria Ramirez

Chair of the United Nations Security Council

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Dear Delegates!

Welcome to the Prague Model United Nations 2023 Security Council committee. My name is Mathias, and I will be one of your chairs during this conference with Maria. I am a second-year Law and Political Science student undergraduate at Jean Moulin Lyon 3 University in France. I had a special interest in international relations and security/defense matters among a lot of passions (History; geography, philosophy, theology ...). Therefore, it is quite natural that I have enjoyed MUN since my first speech when I entered university. MUN allows us to study specific subjects, countries' positions, and the functioning of international organizations, to have a more realistic debate and therefore, a more concrete and pertinent resolution at the end. The first topic of our committee is The Democratic Republic of Congo: A powder keg of Global instability. I look forward to hearing the solutions and stance the nations you will represent have on the conflict which has riddled the DRC and continues to pose threats to the security and lives of many people and property in the DRC.

Please note that this Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. It is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in-depth and use the Annotated Bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. I hope by the end of this conference, you will all have gained valuable skills such as public speaking, debating, critical thinking, and or dispute resolution. Most of all I am glad you will benefit from an experience in international relations which will enable you all to view important issues from a new perspective. I am open to any questions from you before and even after the conference. You may contact me at mathiaspetit516@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Mathias Petit

Chair of the United Nations Security Council

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History of the Committee

The Security Council (SC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN). It was created in 1945, just after World War II (WW2), to maintain world peace after such a catastrophic war. According to article 23¹ of the UN Charter, it is composed of 15 members of the United Nations, from which five members have veto power (the People's Republic of China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States²). The General Assembly shall elect the other ten members over periods of 2 years. The veto power consists in the power that is conferred to these States to reject a resolution passed with its vote against it; it was granted because of their critical roles in the establishment of the UN and their roles in the maintenance of international peace and security. According to article 24 of the UN Charter, the primary objective of the Security Council is to maintain international peace and security through resolutions and decisions, which are binding for the Member States of the United Nations following the purposes and principles of the UN.

The Security Council takes military actions concerning international security and peace, discusses acts of aggression among and within states, recommends peaceful approaches, and follows States in their decision-making processes concerning international matters. As a result, Chapter VI of the Charter refers explicitly to the Security Council's resolutions in peaceful dispute resolution and negotiated settlements among Member States. This resolution could differ strongly from those established by the United Nations General Assembly; all member states must obey them. These resolutions of the SC have the capacity to establish direct actions against a single member state or a threat to international peace and security; it's the only UN body that has the authority to issue binding resolutions on a member state. They could authorize international sanctions or even military action, and even they could command the creation of task forces composed of peacekeepers (voluntary military units that will help « *to maintain peace and security, facilitate the political process, protect civilians, assist in the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants* »³).

¹ Nations, United. 1945. "Chapter v: the Security Council (Articles 23-32)." United Nations. 1945. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/chapter-5>.

²United Nations. 2015. "Voting System | United Nations Security Council." Un.org. 2015. <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/voting-system>.

³United Nations. 2019 "What Is Peacekeeping." United Nations Peacekeeping. 2019. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/what-is-peacekeeping>.

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Mandate of Committee

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is one of the three executive bodies created by the charter of the United Nations (1945)⁴ alongside the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Designed to remedy some of the flaws of the League of Nations, the Security Council is the main body of the United Nations that seeks to maintain peace and international security. He can also be regarded as a crisis management body and has the power and obligations to maintain peace amongst member states. The Security Council comprises ten elected members and five permanent members. Their purpose is to assess threats to international security such as arms proliferation. The five permanent members are the French Republic, the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom (P5).

The Security Council operates under Chapter VI of the United Nations Charter, which calls for

***Did you know?** • The Security Council fosters negotiations, can authorize use of force, impose sanctions, and deploy peacekeeping missions. • Five of the permanent members have veto power meaning they can unilaterally stop an official enactment such as a resolution*

seeking solutions via negotiations, arbitration, and any other peaceful means. However, should the Security Council fail to effectively impose Chapter VI, they evoke Chapter VII, which empowers them to take on more assertive actions such as authorizing the use of force to restore or maintain peace and security or they can impose sanctions.

The UNSC is the only body that can adopt binding resolutions. The Permanent Members are called the P5, and they have what is known as Veto power. This means allows that if any of the P5 countries decide to vote no on a resolution, that resolution is automatically not passed. Considering that this gives a lot of power to the P5 and the P5 majorly of Western powers,

⁴ United Nations. "UN Charter." *United Nations*, 1945, www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter.

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there have been attempts to reform the structure of the UNSC by either adding in more countries or completely eradicating the P5⁵.

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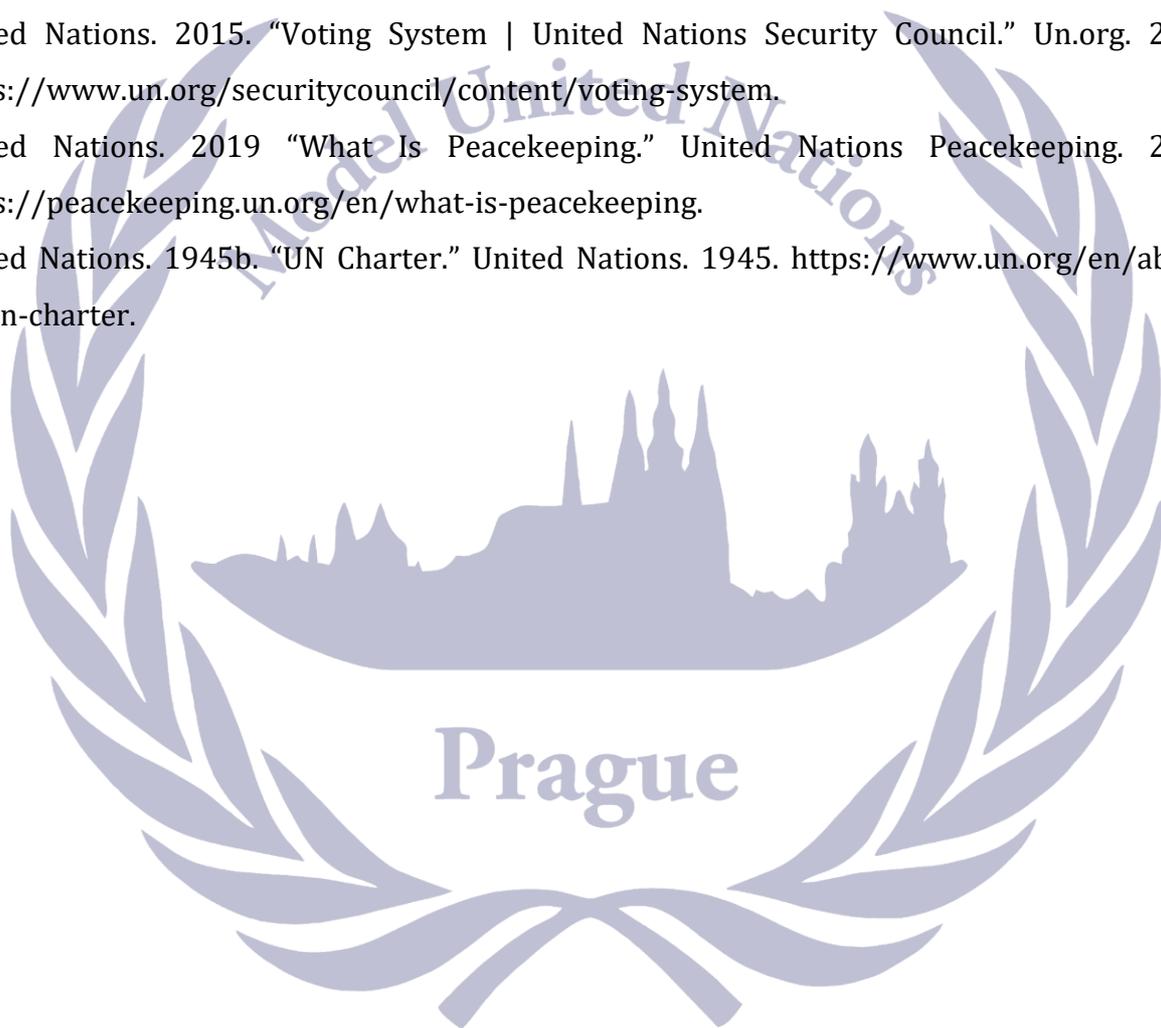
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⁵ Morris, Justin. *UN Security Council Reform: A Counsel for the 21st Century*. Security Dialogue ed., 2000, pp. 265–277.

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Topics A - The Democratic Republic of the Congo: a powder keg of Global Instability



Credit: Anti-UN. Protest in Congo Leave 15 Dead, Including 3 Peacekeepers, New York Times⁶

Introduction to topic

For more than 20 years the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has endured constant conflict and immense instability. The tug of war between the national armed forces and rebel groups over state resources and who has the right to govern has caused immeasurable pain and loss to the country and its citizens. The people of the DRC have known no organized system of governance and have had to endure years of political instability, displacement, environmental damage to their land, inadequate health systems, and economic instability.

One of the major driving forces for the DRC conflict is resources and in particular minerals. The DRC is rich in many precious minerals such as gold, diamonds, copper cobalt, coltan, oil, and manganese. These minerals are not only funding rebel groups but have further become the

⁶Wembi, Steve, and Abdi Latif Dahir. "Anti-U.N. Protests in Congo Leave 15 Dead, Including 3 Peacekeepers." *The New York Times*, 27 July 2022, www.nytimes.com/2022/07/27/world/africa/congo-un-peacekeepers.html. Accessed 7 Jan. 2023.

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foundation for corruption within the government and citizens and an additional reason for forced labor for both adults and children.

A rebel or a rebel group can be defined as a person or organization that resists an established authority or a leader, often violently. In the DRC, there are currently more than 50 rebel armed groups, the most popular being "The March 23" Movement (In French: Mouvement du 23 mars), often abbreviated as M23. They regard themselves as a revolutionary army group whose claim to fight is bringing freedom, liberation, and unity. The M23's enemies have included former President Kabila and those considered corrupt or benefiting from corrupt practices. They are believed to be funded by the Republic of Rwanda and started gaining more territory in the conflict-laden zone of Goma (which borders the Republic of Uganda and the Republic of Rwanda) in 2012. The national army of the Congo has retaliated many times against the M23, however, due to the army personnel being poorly trained, paid, and equipped, some members have resorted to joining rebel groups.

As of 2022 the ongoing crisis remains and causes turmoil for the people of the DRC. This study guide seeks to explain the DRC conflict further and cultivate a possible ground for resolutions.

History of Topic

The colonial history of the Congo involved Belgium which was aimed at exploiting the country's natural resources through ruling from 1888 till the DRC gained independence in 1960. Even with independence, the new government was faced with numerous threats and army rebellion. It did not help matters that the USA and Belgium-backed rebels would assume political powers making way for a series of coup d'états and assassinations under the long-time dictatorship of Mobutu Sese Seko⁷.

The conflict within the Congo was triggered by the massive refugee crisis from the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. When the genocide eventually came to an end after 100 days of terror across Rwanda, perpetrators of the genocide mostly Hutu fled to eastern parts of the DRC and formed armed groups to oppose the new Tutsi government. During this period, opportunistic rebel groups arose. The Congolese government struggled to control the various rebel groups who were also now threatening neighboring countries and eventually war broke out.

⁷ Harish Venugopalan, *Understanding the Conflict in Congo*, (ORF Issue Brief, 2016), 1-12.

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Soon after the massive exodus of refugees into the DRC, the First Congo war (also known as Africa's first world war) broke out in the DRC between October 1996 and May 1997, then known as Zaire, and was dictated by then President Mobutu Sese Seko. The country experienced its first post-democratic civil war and military clash with major spillovers into Sudan and Uganda. This war began as a response to eastern parts of the country such as Goma, being destabilized due to the Rwandan genocide as well as long-lasting regional conflicts which had been brewing and unresolved. State authority had collapsed, and most armed groups were wielding power. Eventually, the tensions escalated and broke out into a full-fledged war when the Republic of Rwanda invaded the Republic of Zaire to defeat the various rebel groups which had sought refuge in the country. Neighboring states such as the Republic of Uganda, the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Angola, and even the State of Eritrea joined the invasion. The Mobutu-led government would be defeated after a few months of intense widespread destruction and extensive ethnic violence. The war ended with a new government being ushered in by Laurent-Desire Kabila and with Zaire being renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo (ref).

Between 1998 and 2003 the government of the DRC sought military assistance from Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Angola as they fought rebels now backed by Uganda and Rwanda. This is known as the second Congo war/The Great war of Africa and Africa's World War 2. This war which had begun just a little over a year since the First Congo War, would last for 5 years. The main reasons for this war were almost identical to those of the first- the refugee crisis turned into rebel groups, poor governance, corruption, and ownership over state resources. The death toll estimated from this period alone was over 5.4 million with many of the deaths being caused by malnutrition and disease. This is considered one of the deadliest conflicts since World War 2. An additional over 2 million people were displaced and had to seek refuge and asylum in the neighboring countries. In 2002 a peace deal was signed, and 2003 saw a transitional government ushered in.

Although the war ended in 2003, hostilities and conflict are still ongoing, especially in the eastern parts of the country. Many factors are fueling the conflict, and these include the massive resource wealth, many people joining rebel groups to gain a source of livelihood, an underpaid army, poor governance, weak institutions, and rampant corruption. To date, the impact and effects of the conflict have been painstakingly diverse and include rape and sexual violence. Massive human rights violations, extreme poverty, child soldiers, child labor, and a huge threat

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of conflict overspilling into neighboring countries especially those with ties to the United States of America such as Burundi, Uganda, and Rwanda.

Discussion of Issue

The 21st century has seen the rise of internal conflict in the African continent- either within the state or extended across state borders and boundaries. Three distinct types of conflict.⁸ stand out, these factional, genocide/ethnic-based, and regional conflict.

In most African states like the DRC- all three elements of conflict have been embraced due to deliberate marginalization, poor economic order, or just a weak system of government.

The DRC is the most populous Francophone country in the world (ref). With a population of an estimated 96 million people, the Congo is nearly the size of Western Europe (France, Germany, Swiss, Austria, and the Benelux). As previously explained the 1994 genocide in Rwanda was one of the triggering and funding factors to the present-day conflict. When Paul Kagame, a Tutsi leader seized power from the Hutus who had killed over 800 thousand Tutsis in the name of ethnic cleansing- more than 2 million Hutus fled to the DRC and settled there.

Of the many who fled to the Congo as refugees, a great number were militiamen who had perpetrated the genocide. Many attacks against the new Rwandan government would be launched from these refugee camps. Tensions further grew in the regions the refugees had settled in as most Hutus dominated and took advantage of the local Congolese Tutsis. Furthermore, foreign aid channeled to the new refugees left the villagers feeling more segregated thus worsening the tensions. This would lead to the First Congo war.

Fast forward two deadly wars later, the conflict in the Congo has been triggered by various factors such as an unstable military and economy and has had a widespread impact economically, politically, environmentally, and health-wise.

Fight for resources

Despite the failure to transition well into democracy, the exploitation of natural resources in the DRC has led to intense conflict. Many natural resources are being exploited and these

⁸ Venugopalan, *Conflict in Congo*, 6.

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include water, diamonds, coltan, tin, copper timber, and cassiterite⁹. The demand for tantalum which comes from refined Coltan is an example of a resource-driving conflict. Tantalum is a resource very used in the chemical industry; one-third of the world's production is from DRC¹⁰.

Credit: Excavators and drillers at work in an open pit at Tenke Fungurume, a copper and cobalt mine 110 km northwest of Lubumbashi REUTERS/Jonny Hogg¹¹



Between 1999 and 2000 there was an increase in tantalum prices which led to an increase in Coltan production in the DRC¹². Production of the mineral on a larger scale involved rebel groups forcing farmers and their families off their land where Coltan had been discovered, and further forcing these same people into working in artisanal mines.¹³ The quest to produce and sell minerals to rebel groups has led to many devastating effects on agriculture and has many social effects akin to slavery.

⁹ Venugopalan, *Conflict in Congo*, 11.

¹⁰ "5 Top Tantalum-Mining Countries." *INN*, 22 Nov. 2018, investingnews.com/daily/resource-investing/critical-metals-investing/tantalum-investing/2013-top-tantalum-producers-rwanda-brazil-drc-canada/.

¹¹ "DRC Mining Risks Worsen as Artisanal Cobalt Miners Turn to Copper." *The Africa Report.com*, 22 Aug. 2019, www.theafricareport.com/16454/drc-mining-risks-worsen-as-artisanal-cobalt-miners-turn-to-copper/.

¹² *Ibid*

¹³ *Ibid*

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Military Involvement

The internal conflict between security forces and non-security forces (armed groups) has resulted in the loss of millions of lives in the DRC. The armed groups are also responsible for most of the serious abuses against civilians in the country. They engage in war crimes such as executions, rape, and forced recruitment of children into illegal mining. In 2021, the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office (UNJHRO) documented that at least in 2024 civilians had been killed at the hands of armed groups. These attacks include firearms attacks, machete raids, kidnapping, looting of livestock and food, and torching homes (ref). The armed military involvement also has dire consequences on the country politically.

Political Consequences

The absence of national sovereignty has affected the DRC in terms of decision-making. This has led the international world to step and thus put the country under a somewhat international trusteeship. Examples of this are how the World Bank and Belgium organizations have overseen operations in the country in terms of road rehabilitations and even bridge building. The World Health Organization (WHO) has overseen dealing with almost all public health challenges and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) has overseen the security sector, particularly protecting civilians and consolidating peace. The churches have overseen primary education and the State is dependent on outside partners for governance.¹⁴

Economic Consequences

There is a direct and immediate impact on the economy whenever the country is riddled with conflict, unstable wars, and political crises. In the case of the DRC, this has resulted in a poor and unstable economy. The country is ranked one of the low-income countries by the United Nations. Most goods such as food, live animals, and transport equipment must be imported abroad and are expensive for locals. The crisis in the DRC has further resulted in a diversion of portfolios away from domestic involvement, and distortion of foreign aid and budgets and has diverted government expenditure from the provision of economic services to either

¹⁴ Venugopalan, *Conflict in Congo*, 17.

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nonproductive aims or towards the military¹⁵. In return, the country is faced with high debt, rampant corruption, and a lack of intent from the government.

Health Consequences

The conflict has resulted in dire consequences, particularly in the health sector which is in ruins. The life expectancy of the average citizen is pegged at no more than 48,7 years. Forced recruitments and deployment of child soldiers by both rebel and government forces have resulted in the premature death of adults but mostly children thus further reducing life expectancy. Diseases have riddled the nation such as HIV/AIDS, water, and airborne outbreaks (as there is a high chance of infections and transmission), and malnutrition. Between the first Congo war and 2008, an estimated around 5.4 million deaths had been recorded from a population of then 75 million. This death toll remains the highest to ever be recorded in a war in the world during the past half-century. Most victims have been civilians who died because of a breakdown in social, economic, and health infrastructure. Others have died from hunger, snake bites, and attacks by wild animals as they fled conflict and were in war zone areas without any access to medical assistance.

Educational Attainment

Human development particularly in children has been one of the major consequences of the ongoing DRC conflict. Education or lack thereof is one of the highlights. Homes, schools, and communities are affected by the armed attacks. This has resulted in the displacement of those in the working class and their families as they seek refuge in camps and even bushes (ref 67), furthermore, exposing them to torture, rape, sex slavery, and forced recruitment at the hands of armed groups. Many children have lost out on educational attainment both formally and informally. Children supposed to be in school are being recruited into the armed forces. The gross effect of the conflict on the national basic plan is seen in how the DRC ranked number 187/187 against other countries on the 2011 Human Development Index and only improved to 186/187 in 2012 (ref 68). This has further created and escalated the unemployment rate and the already low gross domestic product (GDP) and productivity in the country.

¹⁵ Venugopalan, *Conflict in Congo*, 19.

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Environmental Effects

The environment has been affected too to a great extent. From the constant bomb explosions, deforestation, and land degradation in war-torn zones, the environment suffers and will likely meter out climate change effects which may not yet be apparent but will likely be drastic in the future. Agricultural production is another sphere that is affected due to displacement and many farms and fields are being converted into artisanal mines if there is any slight detection of minerals. Agriculture also is the main source of living and livelihood for most citizens means lack thereof also affects the economy.



Credit : Beni, North Kivu, DR Congo, 4 December 2014: Wall of hope, MONUSCO Photos ¹⁶

Conclusion

The crisis in the DRC has had many detrimental effects on the citizens and the country at large. Weak governance and a quest for power continue to bring down the nation as rebels continue vying for power. The lack of state authority has left the country at the mercy of international

¹⁶“MONUSCO Photos.”

Flickr, www.flickr.com/people/67163702@N07. Accessed 7 Jan. 2023.

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aid and donor organizations. The future of the country is at stake due to massive unemployment and low literacy rates. Life expectancy will continue to dwindle as many will struggle to make it past 40 due to armed struggle, inadequate health infrastructure, and looming famine. The conflict which in a nutshell is due to political participation, access to resources, and struggles over identity need to be curbed before it further aggravates the political and economic instability.

Previous International Action

- 2002- DRC government, MLC and most of the civil society and unarmed political opposition groups signed the Sun City Agreement to foster peace.
- 2002 -Governments of the DRC and Rwanda sign the Pretoria Accord.
- 2002- Governments of the DRC and Uganda signed the Luanda Agreement.
- 2005- A/RES/59/285 B. This resolution was about financing of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- 2008 - Peace agreements between the DRC government, the CNDP and other 20-armed groups
- 2010- UN passes legislation to reduce purchase of conflict material.
- 2013- Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic (CAR), Republic of Congo, the DRC, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania, and Zambia enter an agreement into Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the Region
- 2017- S/PRST/2017/12. Statement on the political, security and human rights situation in the DRC.
- 2019 - S/RES/2478. Statement adopted under the agenda item "peace and security in Africa", particularly referring to the Ebola outbreak in the DRC and the need to have international cooperation to address it.
- 2022- S/RES/2641. This UN resolution renewed the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) sanctions regime until 1 July 2023 and the mandate of the Group of Experts assisting the 1533 DRC Sanctions Committee until 1 August 2023¹⁷.

¹⁷ "Resolutions of the Security Council." *MONUSCO*, monusco.unmissions.org/en/resolutions-security-council. Accessed 7 Jan. 2023.

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Questions a resolution should answer

- How best can the international community be sincere in the approach to the crisis in the DRC.
- Bearing in mind the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which measures can be taken to support and maintain peace in the DRC?
- How can the Security Council work together with Member States and the UN to maintain global peace?
- Are there any countries that need to be answerable for aiding or aggravating the conflict in the DRC?
- What and how can multilateral agreements be achieved without breaching the national sovereignty of the DRC and affected and involved states?
- Has your country been directly involved or affected by the ongoing crisis in the DRC?
- Is your country able to contribute to any relief funds or aid towards the DRC?
- If so, how much would your country be willing to contribute, and under which conditions?
- How to improve the protection of local populations from all kinds of violence by armed groups?
- How can the UN peacekeeping mission be enhanced or redefined?
- Should the UN peacekeeping mission be discontinued as many DRC citizens are against it?

Further Reading

Understanding the conflict of Congo, Harish VENUGOPALAN

https://orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/ORF_IssueBrief_139_Venugopalan_Final.pdf

Congo is bleeding at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1fr8woY65I&ab_channel=VictorAdundo

Murder in Kinshasa at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDqTddLqo-w&ab_channel=AlJazeeraEnglish

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TOPIC B: The Myanmar crisis

Introduction to the topic

According to Sanna Johnson, the International Rescue Committee's (IRC) regional vice president for Asia, "This is a very uncertain and turbulent time for Myanmar."¹⁸ On the 1st of February 2021, a coup d'état planned by Myanmar's military took place. The military leaders claimed that the elections in November 2020 were fraudulent; nevertheless, the real reason behind their actions is to preserve their central role in the government. General Min Aung Hlaing is the military's commander-in-chief; he would usually be forced to retire in 2021 according to the Defense Services Act; this Act imposes a mandatory retirement age of 65.

The country's vice president, Swe, was declared acting president; he proclaimed a state of emergency and transferred all the powers to the commander in chief of the defense service. They said that the elections of November 2020 were invalid and new elections would be planned, and the end of the state of emergency. Many protests have taken place, the military repressed everyone of this social manifestation, and they have failed to consolidate control; consequently, the army has reacted violently to the manifestation. The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) is a human rights organization that advocates for the release of all remaining political prisoners in Burma and the improvement of their quality of life during and after incarceration.¹⁹ They document the ongoing imprisonment of political activists in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. According to them, there have been 16016 political prisoners arrested since the military coup, of which only 3188 have been released. Also, according to them, Myanmar's ruling military junta has killed 2404 persons.

According to the newspaper foreign policy, they were more incidents of violence against civilians by state forces in Myanmar than in any other country²⁰.

¹⁸ "What You Need to Know about the Crisis in Myanmar." 2021. International Rescue Committee (IRC). May 6, 2021.

<https://www.rescue.org/article/what-you-need-know-about-crisis-myanmar>

¹⁹ "About AAPP and Vision, Mission, and Activities." n.d. Assistance Association for Political Prisoners. https://aappb.org/?page_id=5628.

²⁰ Yang, Mary. 2022. "The Built-in Brutality of Myanmar's Military." Foreign Policy. August 5, 2022. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/08/05/myanmar-military-brutality-coup-executions/>

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History of Myanmar

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar, also known as Burma, is a country in Southeast Asia, neighbors to Laos, India, Thailand, China, and Bangladesh, it has a population of nearly 54 million people, and the country gained independence from Britain in 1948. Before British colonization, the Konbaung dynasty practiced a centralized form of government; it was the second-largest empire in the country and laid the foundations of the modern state that we have today. Even if they had a monarchy, the separation of power was established in the country. The king was the chief executive; however, he didn't have the legislative authority to make new laws; he only had the power to issue administrative edicts. They had two codes of law, and the center of the government was divided into fiscal, executive, and judicial branches. They had a Parliament, also known as Hluttaw, and they appointed the provinces' governors.

The colonial past of Myanmar

The conflict between Myanmar and the British started when Myanmar wanted to expand its territory near the British colony in India. After the first war between the two countries (1824-1826), slowly, the British took control of some regions of Myanmar, which was forced to cede these provinces to end the war. It was the longest and most expensive war in British imperial history²¹. In 1852, the second war was started by the British, they took control over all of the lower part of the country. While the King of the country still ruled the Upper part of Myanmar, this was soon changed in 1885 with the third war between Myanmar and Britain, after the British occupied the entire area of the country. The Europeans justified this war by claiming they were helping the people of Burma since the last king was a tyrant²².

In the first years, a Burmese armed resisted in the North part of the country until 1885²³. Under the British, Myanmar's economy prospered, and Myanmar became an exporter of goods (rice

²¹ "The First Anglo-Burmese War (Part 1)." n.d. Lostfootsteps.org.
<https://lostfootsteps.org/en/history/the-first-anglo-burmese-war-part-1>.

²² Charles Edward Buckland. 1971. *Dictionary of Indian Biography*. Ardent Media.

²³ "Burma (Myanmar) 1930-2007 | Sciences Po Mass Violence and Resistance - Research Network." *Www.sciencespo.fr*, 17 Apr. 2019,
www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en/document/burma-myanmar-1930-2007.html.

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and rubies) ²⁴. Nevertheless, this mostly benefited British people, Myanmar's citizens continued to be low-class workers, and even the English writer George Orwell describes their relationship as between a master and his slave: "(Myanmar's) relationship with the British empire is that of slave and master."²⁵ The British also increased the racism between ethnic groups since they preferred to employ Myanmar, Indians, and Karen people over locals.

Some national movements took place at the beginning of the XX century; the first was the movement created by the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA), which was created to preserve the Buddhist culture in Myanmar because it was widely eradicated by British colonialism. ²⁶ Even with a progressive constitutional reform, some thought that was not fast enough. In 1920 a student strike broke out in protest against a new University Act, which only benefited the British. Soon after that, the movement protested against the colonial education system. Also, in 1930, a national insurrection against the government, known as the Galon Rebellion, took place for two years. The rebellion was led by Saya San, a former monk, who proclaimed the comeback of the monarchy. In the same year, the great depression had a terrible impact on rice prices; this affected the commercial markets of the rural population. The discontent regarding the situation increased, and the Burma population blamed the colonial government²⁷. As a result, many responded to Saya San and supported the rebellion. The rebellion was stopped the moment their leader was captured.

During the WW 2:

In 1937 British decided to separate Burma and India; this let the Burmese people gain more power over their territory since they were granted a new constitution and a fully elected assembly. Soon after that, during WW2, the Empire of Japan invaded Burma in December 1941, and they took control of the British in one year. This was after the foundation of the communist

²⁴ Chew, E. (1969). The Withdrawal of the Last British Residency from Upper Burma in 1879. *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 10(2), 253-278. doi:10.1017/S0217781100004403

²⁵ <https://www.asiahighlights.com/myanmar/british-colonial-rule#british> Wendy. 2022. "British Colonial Rule in Myanmar - Colonial-Era History and Buildings | Asia Highlights." [Www.asiahighlights.com](https://www.asiahighlights.com). October 25, 2022. <https://www.asiahighlights.com/myanmar/british-colonial-rule#british>

²⁶ Lintner, Bertil, and Human Rights Watch (Organization). 2009. *The Resistance of the Monks: Buddhism and Activism in Burma*. Google Books. Human Rights Watch. https://books.google.fr/books?id=Np6j_KeQtjgC&lpg=PA12&dq=young%20men%27s%20buddhist%20association%20burma&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q=young%20men.

²⁷ Aung-Thwin, M. (2008). Structuring revolt: Communities of interpretation in the historiography of the Saya San rebellion. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 39(2), 297-317. doi:10.1017/S0022463408000222

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party of Burma (CPB) by Aung San, who tried to contact the Chinese Communist, but the Japanese government detected him, and they offered him support for a national uprising. Aung San founded the Burma Independence Army (BIA) in anticipation of the invasion of Japan. In the beginning, the BIA formed a provisional government in some areas. However, Japanese Military leadership had never formally accepted such a plan. The organization of this army was out of control and very disorganized; it was reorganized with the help of the Japanese as the Burma Defence Army (BDA)²⁸. The Japanese declared Burma independent in 1943. However, this independence was only a facade; the leaders of the communist and socialist parties, to resist Fascism, created the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL), and they also made contact with the British. By early 1945, the Allied forces pushed back into Burma, Aung San ordered his army units to turn their weapons on the Japanese.

Myanmar as an independent country

After WW2, the British Governor returned and established a policy to reconstruct the country; however, the AFPFL opposed the government, leading to political instability. Even after changing the British governor, the population went on strike, and the situation was calmed by persuading Aung San to join the Governor's Executive Council along with other members of the AFPFL soon after they began negotiations for Burmese independence, which were concluded successfully in London on 27 January 1947 with the Aung San-Atlee Agreement²⁹.

The first years of Burmese independence were marked by successive insurgencies, even after the communist victory in China in 1949, some parts of the north of the country were controlled by forces under the command of a high-ranking Nationalist Chinese general. Because of the presence of the Chinese Nationalist military, Burma rejected most foreign aid. In the '80s, the government relaxed restrictions on foreign aid, and the economy began to grow; however, the rising debt led to an economic crisis. In 1989³⁰ A constituent assembly was called to revise the constitution of 1974, a new election took place, and in May 1990, the National League of the Democracy (NLD) won a landslide victory over the National Unity Party (NUP).

²⁸ Smith, Martin. 2018. "Burma and World War II." [Culturalsurvival.org](https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/burma-and-world-war-ii). 2018. <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/burma-and-world-war-ii>.

²⁹ "Aung San-Atlee Agreement." 1947. <https://burmestar1010.files.wordpress.com/2011/06/44172419-aungsan-atlee-agreement.pdf>.

³⁰ Smith, Martin, Annie Allsebrook, Anne-Marie Sharman, and Anti-Slavery International. 1994. *Ethnic Groups in Burma : Development, Democracy and Human Rights*. London: Anti-Slavery International.

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Nevertheless, the military³¹ didn't want to let go of their power, and they refused to lead the assembly to convene; they held the two NLD leaders under house arrest. As a result, international pressure increased to let the elected assembly meet, they were also subject to economic sanctions by other countries. The military replaced the chairman of the State law and Prime Minister of Burma with General Than Shwe, who allowed the National convention to meet in 1993 with the condition that the military would preserve a major role in the government. The assembly was dismissed in 1996 without any new constitution, and the tensions between the government and NLD grew after this failure.

Politic context

The human rights violations in Myanmar continued; according to the Special Report to the 59th Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights Geneva, 2003³² Human rights violations under the military regime have been one of the worst in the world. As a result, the United States intensified sanctions in 1997, and the European Union followed this in 2001³³. During the following years, the military army stayed in power until 2011. When the government did democratic reforms, this included the release of the leader of the NLD, the establishment of the National Human Right Commission, the institution of new labor laws, the relaxation of the press, etc. In the new elections of 2012, the NLD won the elections; they won 41 of the 44 contested seats in the lower house of the Parliament. Then in 2015, they also won the majority of the seats in the upper house³⁴. Enough to ensure that their candidate would become president even if their leader can not become president under the constitution since the constitution bars people with foreign spouses or offspring.

Nevertheless, even if the NLD has most of the seats in the Parliament, they don't have full control since the army has 25% of the seats of the Parliament and controls the ministers that

³¹ Smith, Martin, Annie Allsebrook, Anne-Marie Sharman, and Anti-Slavery International. 1994. *Ethnic Groups in Burma : Development, Democracy and Human Rights*. London: Anti-Slavery International.

³² <http://www.middle-east-info.org/gateway/mostrepressiveregimes.pdf> "THE WORLDS MOST REPRESSIVE REGIMES 2003 Freedom House." 2003. Freedom House. <http://www.middle-east-info.org/gateway/mostrepressiveregimes.pdf>.

³³ Howse, Robert, and Jared Genser. 2008. "ARE EU TRADE SANCTIONS on BURMA COMPATIBLE with WTO LAW?" September 19, 2008. <https://web.archive.org/web/20100607153959/http://students.law.umich.edu/mjil/article-pdfs/v29n2-howse-genser.pdf>.

³⁴ *BBC News*. 2015. "Suu Kyi's NLD Wins Myanmar Landslide," November 13, 2015, sec. Asia. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-34805806>.

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are more important in the country. Also, the military can veto any change to the constitution that the NLD proposes. It's important to point out that a large part of the population has not the right to vote (for example, the minority Muslim Rohingya since they aren't recognized as citizens). At the same time, the government didn't plan a voting place in seven areas where ethnic conflict is rife.

Htin Kyaw was elected president of the country in 2016; he was the first elected president with no ties to the military since the coup d'état in 1962. The leader of the NLD Aung San Suu Kyi took the role of State Counsellor of Myanmar, which was the title of the *de facto* head of the government, a position similar to a Prime Minister. The internal politics started to crumble again with the death of Ko Ni, a key member of Myanmar's government; he was helping the State Counsellor reform the country. Soon after, another series of killings of Muslim Rohingya people forced a part of the population to flee the country.

Before the Coup d'état

On the 8th of November 2020, the NLD won 396 of the 476 seats in Parliament³⁵, the Union Election Commission, which is linked to the military, rejected the emerging results, and they tried to persuade that a fresh election needs to be held with the military acting as observers. The military-linked Union Solidarity and Development Party rejected the emerging results, urging that a fresh election be held with the military acting as observers. However, the election observers said the voting was without significant irregularities, the election commission said there were no errors on a scale that could mean fraud³⁶. The military claimed an irregularity of over 8 million, however, Myanmar's election commission rejected and dismissed the claims that fraud played a significant role in determining the outcome of the elections.³⁷

³⁵ Beech, Hannah, and Saw Nang. 2020. "Myanmar Election Delivers Another Decisive Win for Aung San Suu Kyi." *The New York Times*, November 11, 2020, sec. World. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/11/world/asia/myanmar-election-aung-san-suu-kyi-results.html>.

³⁶ Staff, Reuters. 2021. "Explainer: Crisis in Myanmar after Army Alleges Election Fraud." *Reuters*, February 1, 2021. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-myanmar-politics-explainer/explainer-crisis-in-myanmar-after-army-alleges-election-fraud-idUSKBN2A113H>.

³⁷ "Myanmar Election Commission Rejects Military's Fraud Claims." 2021. AP NEWS. May 3, 2021. <https://apnews.com/article/aung-san-suu-kyi-elections-myanmar-cc1b225b806c27dda748d3ab51d0e47f>.

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Discussion of the issue and subtopics

Coup d'état:

On 1 February 2021, the military took control of different communications (such as television channels, etc.) in an early morning raid. This operation occurred just before the first day of a new session of Parliament. Around 400 members of Parliament were placed under house arrest in Naypyitaw ³⁸, the capital of Myanmar, including the chairperson of the National League for Democracy and State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, who was arrested. Soon after the vice president, Myint Swe acted as the president, he proclaimed a state of emergency and transferred all the powers to the military's commander-in-chief. They announced on TV that they had taken control of the country for one year. The military claimed the existence of irregularities in the last elections, where Suu Kyi's party won in a landslide compared to the military party, nevertheless, according to the election commission³⁹, there is no proof of any fraud committed during the elections. The military declared that new elections would be held, and in the meantime, they would retrain the power until then.⁴⁰

Main victims

Myanmar is facing violence on a massive scale, including countrywide arbitrary detentions, unnecessary and disproportionate, according to the OHCHR; with the help of the victims, victim's advocates, and witnesses and corroborated by satellite imagery, they found out that security forces killed at least 1,500 people, 11,742 were detained by the State administration council (SAC)

Between 1 February 2021 and 31 January 2022

at least

1,500

people were killed by the security forces or their affiliates

at least

11,742

individuals were detained by the SAC and its affiliated armed elements

in and around

220

out of 330 townships saw armed clashes representing each state, region and union territory

Created: 30 March 2022 Author: OHCHR Myanmar, IMDA/ERS/FOTCD
Source: OHCHR, OCHA, AAPP, ACLED

Children: Myanmar's children will become a lost generation. ⁴¹

³⁸ Desk, New. 2021. "Hundreds of Myanmar MPs under House Arrest." Wwww.thenews.com.pk. January 3, 2021. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/784319-hundreds-of-myanmar-mps-under-house-arrest>.

³⁹ Milko, Victoria. 2021. "EXPLAINER: Why Did the Military Stage a Coup in Myanmar?" AP NEWS. April 20, 2021. https://apnews.com/article/military-coup-myanmar-explained-f3e8a294e63e00509ea2865b6e5c342d?utm_source=apnews&utm_medium=relatedcontentmodule.

⁴⁰ "Myanmar to Clarify Voter Fraud, Hold New Round of Elections." 2021. The Myanmar Times. February 1, 2021. <https://www.mmtimes.com/news/myanmar-clarify-voter-fraud-hold-new-round-elections.html>.

⁴¹ "OHCHR | A/HRC/50/CRP.1: Conference Room Paper of the Special Rapporteur, 'Losing a Generation: How the Military Junta Is Attacking Myanmar's Children and Stealing Their Future.'" n.d. OHCHR.

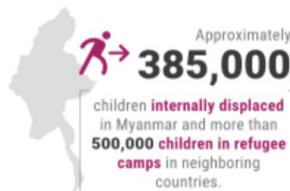
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Arbitrary detention: Since the beginning of the coup more than 1,400 children have been arbitrarily detained by junta forces.



Displacement: The junta's relentless targeting of civilians and rampant human rights violations have contributed to widespread internal displacement.



Created 13 June 2022, Sources OHCHR sources cited in A/HRC/50/CRP.1

According to the United Nations Human Rights, Myanmar's children « will become a lost generation .» The conference Room Paper of the Special Rapporteur of the OHCHR show extremely alarming numbers of the situation; as a result of the military coup, the military attacks on civilians have internally displaced approximately 385,000 children, the junta has even detained more than 1,400 children, some of whom were only detained to put pressure on their families. At least 142 have been tortured by the junta forces; they were beaten, cut, and stabbed; others have been burned, and they must endure mock executions and deprived conditions where they don't have food or water. At least 382 have been killed by armed groups. Because of the situation, others could die because they don't have their routine immunization. Their education has also been affected; more than 7.8 million children are out of school, at least 260 schools have been attacked, and the military or an armed group has occupied approximately 320 schools. As a result, they have been victims and suffer more than any children should be able to support. These children would have difficulties for all their life, mental problems, or traumas caused by the conflict and deserve to

receive all the help they can get.

Prisoners and political prisoners

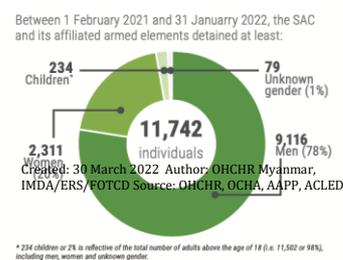
The definition proposed by the AAPP: « anyone arrested, detained, or imprisoned because of their perceived or known active role, perceived, or known supporting role, or in association with

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activities promoting freedom, justice, equality, human rights, including ethnic rights, in association with the pro-democracy movement.»⁴²

Since the coup, the detention procedures have evolved; at the beginning, it was detained in a police station or prison, then some of the persons were sent to military interrogation centers even before being detained in a police station. According to the report of the OHCHR, some testimonies explained that they were tortured to extract information regarding some protests done by the citizens.

Fig. 4 Detentions by age and gender



Another **1,971** individuals are wanted by the SAC, forcing them to go into hiding

According to the AAPP, on 31 December 2021, at least 8,338 remained in detention, including almost 200 children. Who is being held hostage? « *Journalist, NLD party members, their families, peaceful protesters, members of the civil disobedience movement, and other activists, as well as bystanders.* » Testimonies of the families, who were able to see the detained, claimed that they were being tortured, and some of them were ill and didn't have any treatment.

The report of Amnesty International explained that sexual violence is used against women, girls, and even some men arrested during protests by the security forces of the country. Those who are part of the LGBTI also have been subject to torture, including sexual violence.

Civilians

KEY DISPLACEMENT FIGURES

72,000

Estimated refugee movements to neighbouring countries since 1 February 2021

1,086,000

Refugees and asylum-seekers from Myanmar in neighbouring countries as of 30 June 2022

1,143,000

Estimated total internally displaced persons (IDPs) within Myanmar, displaced since 1 February 2021*

Source: UN in Myanmar

1,473,000

Estimated total internally displaced persons (IDPs) within Myanmar as of 5 December 2022*

Source: UN in Myanmar

Publishing date 8 Dec 2022 | Data sources: UN in Myanmar | Author: UNHCR Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP)

According to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) report,⁴³ thousands of people have been displaced because of the conflict. The military used a strategy to attack towns and villages, especially the ethnic states; this is one of the principles caused by why the people were

⁴²“AAPP | Assistance Association for Political Prisoners.” n.d. AAPP | Assistance Association for Political Prisoners. <https://aappb.org>.

⁴³UNHCR. n.d. “Myanmar Situation.” Global Focus. <https://reporting.unhcr.org/myanmarsituation>.

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forcibly displaced to escape these attacks⁴⁴. Sometimes civilians are even used as human shields by the military to protect them from the Chinland Defence Force (CDF). The CDF is a rebel group in Myanmar formed after the coup to protect Chin State from the military junta. « In rural areas, soldiers have burned homes and villages, raped women, shot at fleeing civilians, and cut off food supplies »⁴⁵. They also attack from the sky, and they throw bombs at civilian encampments; for example, on the 23 of October 2022, military planes bombed an open-air concert in Kachin State as a result, at least 80 people were killed, according to emergency workers⁴⁶.

Human rights violations in Myanmar

Genocide:

The Rohingya genocide is a series of persecutions and killings of the Muslim Rohingya people, an ethnic minority of Myanmar, by the Burmese military. The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres described as "one of, if not the, most discriminated people in the world" ⁴⁷. In 2017, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) claimed that « at least 9,000 Rohingya died in Myanmar, in Rakhine state, between 25 August and 24 September 2017⁴⁸ », and 700,000 ⁴⁹ Rohingya have fled to Bangladesh.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) ordered on the 23rd January 2020 the government of Myanmar to prevent all genocidal acts against Rohingya Muslims. Over a million Rohingya Muslims flee to other countries. According to Param-Preet Singh, associate international justice director at Human Rights Watch. "The ICJ order to Myanmar to take concrete steps to prevent the genocide of the Rohingya is a landmark step to stop further atrocities against one of the

⁴⁴ Amnesty International. 2021. "Everything You Need to Know about Human Rights in Myanmar 2020." Amnesty International. 2021. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/south-east-asia-and-the-pacific/myanmar/report-myanmar/>.

⁴⁵ Goldman, Russell. 2021. "Myanmar's Protests, Explained." *The New York Times*, March 4, 2021, sec. World. <https://www.nytimes.com/article/myanmar-news-protests-coup.html>.

⁴⁶ Paddock, Richard C. 2022. "Airstrike Kills at Least 80 during Outdoor Concert in Myanmar." *The New York Times*, October 25, 2022, sec. World. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/25/world/asia/myanmar-coup-concert-killed.html?searchResultPosition=2>.

⁴⁷ BBC News. 2020. "Myanmar Rohingya: What You Need to Know about the Crisis," January 23, 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-41566561>.

⁴⁸ <https://www.msf.org/myanmarbangladesh-msf-surveys-estimate-least-6700-rohingya-were-killed-during-attacks-myanmar>

⁴⁹ Cuddy, Alice. 2021. "Myanmar Coup: What Is Happening and Why?" *BBC News*, April 1, 2021, sec. Asia. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-55902070>.

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world's most persecuted people"⁵⁰. Myanmar's military committed extensive atrocities against this minority, including murder, rape, and arson, international.

Now, after the coup, Rohingyas are more vulnerable than before. The newspaper Aljazeera explained how they have been restricted in their freedom of movement and are continually subject to intimidation from the military. They have also been forced to pay a fee to travel, a fee that is quite expensive for people living in poverty. In addition, they need authorization from the military, and they arrest those who don't have this document. The military had not respected the order from the ICJ.

Wai Wai Nu is the founder and executive director of the Women's Peace Network, an organization that focuses on peace-building in Myanmar. She explained that after the coup, « 600,000 Rohingyas continue to live in apartheid-like conditions, she told the panel, including 140,000 forcibly segregated in internally displaced person camps, where they are denied access to basic needs and livelihoods »⁵¹.

Violation of the right to have humanitarian help

According to the report of Amnesty International, military authorities refuse to let humanitarian access help internally displaced people. Also, there have been reports of aid convoys taken by the soldiers. Even in June 2022, « the military destroyed an ambulance and burned stockpiles of rice and medicine intended for displaced people ..»⁵² In some areas, they imposed more requirements on the organizations to obtain a permit to travel with the only objective of delaying aid.

⁵⁰ Human Rights Watch. 2020. "World Court Rules against Myanmar on Rohingya." Human Rights Watch. January 23, 2020. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/01/23/world-court-rules-against-myanmar-rohingya>.

⁵¹ OHCHR. 2022. "Activist Accuses Military of Seeking to Erase Myanmar's Rohingyas." OHCHR. June 30, 2022. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2022/06/activist-accuses-military-seeking-erase-myanmars-rohingyas-0>.

⁵² Amnesty International. 2021. "Everything You Need to Know about Human Rights in Myanmar 2020." Amnesty International. 2021. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/south-east-asia-and-the-pacific/myanmar/report-myanmar/>.

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Violation of the right to life

First, the right to life entrails the right not to be deprived of life arbitrarily or unlawfully by the government or its agents, the death penalty has been used to sentence dozens of people, including children, to death; these trials are nothing but fair, even some of them, their trial was done in their absence. Then, their right to a health system has also been neglected. The system in the country collapsed after the coup as health workers joined the civil disobedience movement; this, in addition to the covid-19, led the country to an utterly absent health system. It's only in a clandestine way that health workers have been providing medical care. According to World Health Organization (WHO)⁵³, in 2022, more than 286 attacks on healthcare facilities and personnel took place. Hundreds of lives are lost because emergency surgeries are not being performed, and many doctors refuse to work under the military regime. For example, Dr. Kyaw Moe, one of the striking Mandalay General surgeons, said, « I know there are hundreds of people dying per week. Of course, I feel sorry and very sad for that, but the most important thing for our country is to bring down the military. If not, our future generations and our country will die. »⁵⁴ The military also confiscated personal protective equipment and oxygen supplies for their use⁵⁵; they even opened fire to disperse people queuing for oxygen cylinders in Yangon. Some



RIGHT TO LIFE

KILLED DURING PROTESTS / RAIDS

Live ammunition to disperse and target demonstrators and perusing fleeing protestors, raids and searches to find suspected anti-military individuals

KILLED IN CUSTODY

Due to lack of adequate medical care for injuries obtained in raids

Cruel and inhuman treatment and torture especially during interrogation

Increasing incidences – average of 12 cases per month from February to June, July onwards average of 38, 70 deaths in December alone

Frequently relatives unaware of whereabouts of detainees, remains disposed of without informing family or information not provided when requested

Where returned bodies showed signs of torture and ill-treatment

KILLED IN "CLEARANCE OPERATIONS"

40 villagers in Kani Township Sagaing Region in clearance operations in July including 9 corpses found in forest with bound hands and wounds consistent with knives and sticks

Starting from July 2021 several mass killings

Burnt remains of 11 individuals in Done Taw Village, Sagaing Region in early December

Some examples:

Burnt remains of 40 individuals in trucks in Hpruso Township in Kayah State on 24 December

Created: 30 March 2022 Author: OHCHR Myanmar, IMDA/ERS/FOTCD Source: OHCHR, OCHA, AAPP, ACLED

⁵³ Amnesty International. 2021. "Everything You Need to Know about Human Rights in Myanmar 2020." Amnesty International. 2021. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/south-east-asia-and-the-pacific/myanmar/report-myanmar/>.

⁵⁴ Paddock, Richard C. 2021. "In Myanmar, Health Care's Collapse Takes Its Own Toll." *The New York Times*, June 12, 2021, sec. World. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/12/world/asia/myanmar-coup-doctors-health.html>.

⁵⁵ Amnesty International. 2021. "Everything You Need to Know about Human Rights in Myanmar 2020." Amnesty International. 2021. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/south-east-asia-and-the-pacific/myanmar/report-myanmar/>.

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reports claim that displaced women are giving birth without basic medical services, and newborn babies are dying because they don't have adequate medical services.

Furthermore, protestors are dying because they could not have access to medical care to trade their injuries during the protest or even after the torture that they are being subjected to in the interrogation rooms. Others are being killed in « *clearance operations*. »

Fragile economy:

Myanmar's economy has faced many disruptions over the last two years, between covid-19 and the sanctions imposed by other countries due to the coup. According to the World Bank⁵⁶, they could not grow the previous year economically, and in the absence of a substantial rebound in growth, even lower than in 2019, the country's prognosis is not looking good. This means that livelihoods will continue to be strained, already, in 2022, 40% of the population is living below the national poverty line. Even World Bank Country Director for Myanmar, Cambodia, and Lao PDR Mariam Sherman said, « *Myanmar last year experienced one of the worst economic contractions in the world, and the limited growth we forecast this year leaves its economic recovery far behind other countries [...] This will continue to test the resilience of the Myanmar people, with household incomes declining and coping mechanisms against food insecurity and poverty increasingly under strain amidst ongoing internal conflict.*»⁵⁷

In some areas, economic activity has picked up, however, the conflict, the transport disruptions, and the price increase are being heavily an impasse for some activities such as agriculture since they depend on domestic demand, and almost half of the population is under the national poverty line, this demand will continue to decrease.

Also, the military stated on 31 July that they would be extended the country's state of emergency for six months to stabilize the economy⁵⁸. They have not only tried to stabilize the

⁵⁶ The World Bank. 2022. "Myanmar Economy Remains Fragile, with Reform Reversals Weakening the Outlook." World Bank. July 21, 2022. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/07/21/myanmar-economy-remains-fragile-with-reform-reversals-further-weakening-the-outlook>.

⁵⁷ The World Bank. 2022. "Myanmar Economy Remains Fragile, with Reform Reversals Weakening the Outlook." World Bank. July 21, 2022. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/07/21/myanmar-economy-remains-fragile-with-reform-reversals-further-weakening-the-outlook>.

⁵⁸ Khine Lin Kyaw, "Myanmar Junta Chief Says Stability Must Precede Elections," Bloomberg, 1 August 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-07-31/myanmar-extends-state-of-emergency-for-six-months-until-february>.

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economy but also continue to fight the local militias. According to the Special Advisory Council for Myanmar⁵⁹, « *after 19 months of the coup, the military is only in control of 17% of the country, and 23% is actively contested; the remainder is in the hands of the NUG and the ethnic resistance organizations (EROs). As a result, 71% of the 330 townships nationwide, in both the ethnic border regions and the Bamar heartland, were engaged in armed resistance to the military in the first half of 2022, up from 59% in 2020.* »

While the conflict continues, « *Myanmar's economy is in a free fall* »⁶⁰ and the GDP contracted by 18% in 2021, inflation continues to increase; for example, rice prices are up 20% this year and 50% since the coup. The exception being oil and gas revenues continue to be strong since the country brings in \$800 million in 2022 gas exports⁶¹. It's more than the economy that affected people such as the financial system and the farmers, who have been hard hit. For example, the prices of farmers in things such as fertilizer and pesticides have increased enormously⁶².

Previous international action

Countries in favor of the military

China, Russia, and India are supporting Myanmar's military⁶³, without them they would not have been able to establish their power in some parts of the country since they failed to consolidate power in the whole country.

Russia is one of the biggest supporters of Myanmar's military junta, they have hosted the coup leader, General Aung Hlaing, for diplomatic meetings, and they even send a senior defense

⁵⁹ The Special Advisory Council for Myanmar, "Briefing Paper: Effective Control in Myanmar," 5 September 2022, <https://specialadvisorycouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/SAC-M-Briefing-Paper-Effective-Control-in-Myanmar-ENGLISH-2.pdf>.

⁶⁰ "The NUG's Economic War on Myanmar's Military • Stimson Center." 2022. Stimson Center. September 27, 2022. <https://www.stimson.org/2022/the-nugs-economic-war-on-myanmars-military/>.

⁶¹ "Myanmar brings in \$800 mln from April-July gas exports," Reuters, 25 August 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/myanmar-brings-800-mln-april-july-gas-exports-2022-08-25/>. This was \$60.7 million more than in Q2 of 2021.)

⁶² "Myanmar Farmers Expect Poor Rice Harvest as Costs Soar," The Irrawaddy, 1 September 2022, <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/myanmar-farmers-expect-poor-rice-harvest-as-costs-soar.html>.

⁶³ "China, Russia, India Enabling Myanmar's Military Rule: Report." 2022. Wwww.aljazeera.com. November 2, 2022. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/11/2/china-russia-india-enabling-myanmars-military-report>.

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official for a military event in Myanmar. At the same time, Myanmar's military voiced their support for Russia's invasion of Ukraine. They are one of the top arms suppliers of Myanmar; the other one is China. However, the SC hasn't pursued any action.⁶⁴

The relationship with China continues to be very strong; in April 2022, China's government released a statement where they showed their support to Myanmar's military government "no matter how the situation changes."⁶⁵ Also, during a regional forum, the Chinese Foreign minister said the friendship between China and Myanmar had "remained rock-solid and unbreakable without being affected by domestic changes in each other's country."⁶⁶ As same as with Russia, Myanmar voiced its support regarding the positions of China related to Taiwan and human rights.

Five-Point Consensus

On the situation in Myanmar, the Leaders reached consensus on the following:

- First, there shall be immediate cessation of violence in Myanmar and all parties shall exercise utmost restraint.
- Second, constructive dialogue among all parties concerned shall commence to seek a peaceful solution in the interests of the people.
- Third, a special envoy of the ASEAN Chair shall facilitate mediation of the dialogue process, with the assistance of the Secretary-General of ASEAN.
- Fourth, ASEAN shall provide humanitarian assistance through the AHA Centre.
- Fifth, the special envoy and delegation shall visit Myanmar to meet with all parties concerned.

Actions from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

Myanmar generals were banned from ASEAN until the peace plan progressed; in April 2021, the foreign ministers, the army chief, and coup leader General Min Aung Hlaing agreed on a five-point plan⁶⁷. After the coup, the ASEAN demanded the « *immediate cessation of violence* » and called on all the parties to exercise « *utmost restraint.*»

However, this plan hasn't been followed by the military, and on August 2022, the foreign ministers demanded that the SAC take action to

⁶⁴ Solomon, Feliz. 2022. "Russia Reaffirms Support for Myanmar's Junta after Execution of Activists." *Wall Street Journal*, August 3, 2022, sec. World. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/russia-reaffirms-support-for-myanmars-junta-after-execution-of-activists-11659523284>.

⁶⁵ Strangio, Sebastian. 2022. "China Pledges Support for Myanmar's Junta, 'No Matter How the Situation Changes.'" *TheDiplomat.com*. April 4, 2022. <https://thediplomat.com/2022/04/china-pledges-support-for-myanmars-junta-no-matter-how-the-situation-changes/>.

⁶⁶ Solomon, Feliz. 2022. "Russia Reaffirms Support for Myanmar's Junta after Execution of Activists." *Wall Street Journal*, August 3, 2022, sec. World. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/russia-reaffirms-support-for-myanmars-junta-after-execution-of-activists-11659523284>.

⁶⁷ Asean, and Secretariat. 2021. "Chairman's Statement on the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting." <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/Chairmans-Statement-on-ALM-Five-Point-Consensus-24-April-2021-FINAL-a-1.pdf>.

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comply with the plan before a regional summit on November⁶⁸. In response to that, the Military rejected the statement and inferred that the ASEAN should not interfere with the internal affairs of the country, they even said, « *Myanmar believes that ASEAN can maintain its unity and centrality in the long-term only if all ASEAN member states respect the provisions and basic principles of the ASEAN Charter, especially equality, inclusiveness, sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of ASEAN Member States.* »⁶⁹

In addition, ASEAN asked their members to increase humanitarian assistance to Myanmar to help resolve the situation, especially since the coup the country has been in economic stagnation that has increased poverty.

For example, the Government of Japan provided more than US \$20 million in humanitarian assistance and also provided medical equipment such as ambulances and oxygen to help the country against COVID-19. However, after the petition of the ASEAN, they decided to provide 18,5 million US dollars. They also delivered « *food, daily necessities such as shelters and mattresses, and medical supplies to the people of Myanmar through international organizations and the ASEAN Secretariat*⁷⁰ .»

Actions from the United Nations

According to the UN, many Myanmar citizens are forced to face difficult situations due to the conflict, economic stagnation, and the spread of covid-19. As a result, they announced in January 2022 « *the Humanitarian Response Plan for Myanmar* » to ask the international community to provide assistance of US \$826 million⁷¹. At least 70,000 people have fled Myanmar in the wake of the coup, and more than one million have been internally displaced, according to the High Commissioner's Office, OHCHR⁷². The UN is working with ASEAN regarding the protection of refugees and forcibly displaced persons.

⁶⁸ "Myanmar Generals Banned from ASEAN until Peace Plan Progress." 2022. Www.aljazeera.com. August 6, 2022. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/8/6/myanmar-generals-banned-from-asean-until-peace-plan-progress>.

⁶⁹ "Myanmar Generals Banned from ASEAN until Peace Plan Progress." 2022. Www.aljazeera.com. August 6, 2022. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/8/6/myanmar-generals-banned-from-asean-until-peace-plan-progress>.

⁷⁰ "Humanitarian Assistance to the People of Myanmar." 2022. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. February 8, 2022. https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press1e_000256.html.

⁷¹ "Humanitarian Assistance to the People of Myanmar - Myanmar | ReliefWeb." 2022. Reliefweb.int. February 8, 2022. <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/humanitarian-assistance-people-myanmar>.

⁷² 2022b. "UN Rights Chief Appeals for a Halt in Forced Returns to Myanmar." UN News. October 26, 2022. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/10/1129907>.

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UNHCR⁷³ and its partners (UN agencies, local partners, and communities) deployed resources to support as many displaced as possible. Often, they complimented the local community responses. In many parts of Myanmar, humanitarian aid has no access due to insecurity and challenges in obtaining access approvals. Communities play a leading role in assisting displaced populations. In 2021 their assistance reached approximately 170,000 individuals, they distributed items such as ropes, blankets, kitchen sets, sleeping mats, and COVID-19 personal protective equipment. They even established a temporary base in 2022 to coordinate the distribution of emergency aid. Some individuals are dependent on humanitarian support for survival.

The members of the SC⁷⁴ condemned the recent activities of the Myanmar military, they were opposed to the executions of opposition activists, and they called for the release of all the arbitrarily detained prisoners. Also, they support the statement of the ASEAN and all their measures taken. Then, they claimed that the dialogue with the parties should be the best solution having the best interest of the people of Myanmar, for that, all forms of violence should be stopped. Thus, they reiterated their support of Myanmar's democratic transition that started in 2011.

Actions from the European Union :

Myanmar's government-in-exile is asking for official recognition from other countries. The National Unity Government (NUG), a resistance movement fighting Myanmar's military junta, claimed it would be a game changer. In October 2021, the European Parliament supported the NUG as the « *only legitimate representatives of the democratic wishes of the people of Myanmar.*⁷⁵ »

⁷³ Refugees, United Nations High Commissioner for. 2022. "UNHCR Steps up Aid for Displaced in Myanmar as Conflict Intensifies." UNHCR. February 11, 2022. <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2022/2/6206288c4/unhcr-steps-aid-displaced-myanmar-conflict-intensifies.html>.

⁷⁴ Security Council. 2022. "Security Council Press Statement on Situation in Myanmar | UN Press." Press.un.org. July 27, 2022. <https://press.un.org/en/2022/sc14986.doc.htm>.

⁷⁵ SAGARTZ, Michael GAHLER, Lefteris CHRISTOFOROU, Antonio LÓPEZ-ISTÚRIZ WHITE, etc. 2022. "MOTION for a RESOLUTION on Myanmar, One Year after the Coup | B9-0148/2022 | European Parliament." Ww.europarl.europa.eu. March 8, 2022. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/B-9-2022-0148_EN.html.

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According to the Special Advisory Council for Myanmar, the Junta only has effective control over less than 1/5 of Myanmar's territory, they and the NUG and its allies (local militias) control more than half of the country⁷⁶. According to a testimony of a senior official at the NUG, they are establishing a representative office (a de facto embassy) in France, and they have another one in the Czech Republic.

Since the coup, the European Parliament has adopted four resolutions on Myanmar, and they have adopted several economic actions. They also target a list of persons, who are being subject to restrictive measures, they have an asset freeze and a travel ban from entering or transiting EU territory. In addition, some previous restrictive measures were the embargo on arms and equipment and export restrictions. The EU also is holding any financial assistance going to the government and freezing all EU assistance that could be seen as supporting the junta. The EU also condemned the continued violation of human rights. As the ASEAN, they called for an immediate cessation of all hostilities and supported the ASEAN's efforts and the Five-point consensus. They also call for the release of arbitrarily detained during the coup.⁷⁷

Questions a resolution should answer.

- Which would be the best course of action for the security council to implement regarding the situation?
- Is economic measures the ideal solution? Compare this to the same measure implemented in the early XXI century.
- What could the delegates propose regarding the violations of human rights that are happening right now?
- How can we ensure that emergency aid is given to the most fragile populations?
- Why does the country continue failing to follow the military regimen? How could we prevent this next time?

⁷⁶ Hutt, David. 2022. "Myanmar Resistance Movement Calls for More EU Support - DW - 10/05/2022." Dw.com. May 10, 2022. <https://www.dw.com/en/eu-support-for-myanmar-resistance/a-63341502>.

⁷⁷ European Council. 2022. "Myanmar/Burma: EU Imposes Further Restrictive Measures on 19 Individuals and One Entity." Wwww.consilium.europa.eu. November 8, 2022. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/11/08/myanmar-burma-eu-imposes-further-restrictive-measures-on-19-individuals-and-one-entity/>.

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- What can the security council do without breaching the national sovereignty of Myanmar?
- What are the aids and solutions that have already been proposed? Should they be improved, continued, or stopped?

Further readings:

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<https://bangkok.ohchr.org/myanmar/>
- The situation of human rights in Myanmar from 1 February 2021 to 31 January 2022
<https://bangkok.ohchr.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/myanmar-factsheet-v22.pdf>
- One year on the momentum of Myanmar's armed rebellion
https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/uploads/documents/ASIA_220519_1YearOn-BRIEF_V1r2.pdf
- UNHCR regional bureau for Asia and Pacific (RBAN) Myanmar emergency update as of 5 Dec 2022
<https://reporting.unhcr.org/document/3834>
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<https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/south-east-asia-and-the-pacific/myanmar/report-myanmar/>

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