Boston University Academy Model United Nations Conference VII

Saturday, February 2nd to Sunday, February 3rd, 2019

Boston University Academy

Boston, MA

SOCHUM

Hello Delegates!

We are Benjamin Isakoff and Sonya Poznansky, and we will be co-chairing the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM) at BUAMUN 2019. We are, respectively, a sophomore and a junior at BU Academy.

We are excited to be part of such an amazing committee and hope that you guys are as excited to be part of it. Model UN is always a ton of fun, and only gets more fun the more you participate. Hopefully we can make this conference exciting, unpredictable and an enjoyable experience. Make sure to stay on your feet and have fun, but also make sure to be respectful of other cultures, ideas and people. Our topics are heavily politicized, and while that will make it more thought-provoking, it also adds the need for caution.

Model UN, especially at this stage, is full of creativity and make sure you utilize every aspect of your knowledge. Do research, find middle ground solutions, but most importantly improvise a bit. After all, improvising, understanding opposing views, and sounding convincing are the three most valuable things Model UN can teach you. So let's see how you guys can solve some of the world's most pressing social, humanitarian and cultural issues. Your first step will be to write a well-researched position paper covering the background and stance of your country. Send these to sonyapoz@bu.edu.

Your co-chairs,
Benjamin Isakoff
BU Academy '21
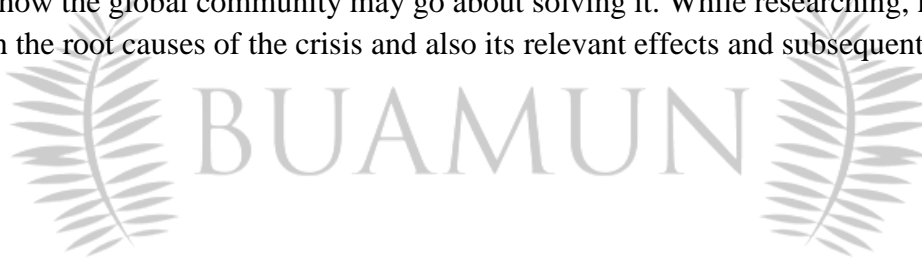bisakoff@bu.edu
Sonya Poznansky
BU Academy '20
sonyapoz@bu.edu

Committee Information

The Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee, also known as SOCHUM or the Third Committee, was established as a general assembly in the United Nations to tackle a broad range of issues pertaining to social and humanitarian affairs. In SOCHUM, human rights is the key, as usually more than half of SOCHUM's resolutions are submitted under a human rights agenda.[1] SOCHUM is often at the forefront of global human rights issue. It is known for its work regarding women's and children's rights and combating racial discrimination, while also weighing in the rights of cultures and indigenous peoples. Additionally, it is concerned with human trafficking and modern slavery, as well as racism, xenophobia, and race-related intolerance. We will be tackling both of these issues in this year's committee.

However, you should also take into account that unlike crisis committees or the security council, in SOCHUM following resolutions are not legally binding to all countries, so resolutions should be reasonable for countries to follow.

In our debate, we must tackle these issues with a team-based mindset, keeping in mind that resolutions are most effective when all delegates are able to set aside differences of culture and inherent beliefs and can collaborate on agreements that meet as many nations' interests as possible. Before our committee meetings, your task will be to research this issue and develop a position on how the global community may go about solving it. While researching, make sure to address both the root causes of the crisis and also its relevant effects and subsequent damage.

Topic 1: Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance

Article 1 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination defines racial discrimination as the

"Distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life."[1]

This document known has been ratified by 179 of the possible 193 UN member countries, since its implementation in 1969.

Despite this there have still been many governments, individuals, and extremist groups have continued to thrive and promote discrimination. One way this has been done is through increasing stratification, or the expansion of a class system. This has occurred throughout India, where the country, despite appearing to be trying to end its class system, has still "created an incentive to keep this [caste related] stratification alive."[2] Extremist groups have furthered intolerance through violence and many government's non-reaction have "normalized such behaviour."[3]

These same groups and governments have also blocked minority refugees and migrants from entering their countries. These movements cite national security as the main argument for the increase in refugee regulation which has therefore sparked a debate on when national security overrides intolerance policy, and when it is necessary to the maintain equality between refugees and citizens. This argument is mainly used in the debate on xenophobia and its presence in the refugee crisis. Another common argument for the prevention of anti-discrimination and xenophobia measures is the degradation of national pride and culture, and that infringement of this is an infringement of national sovereignty.

On the other hand, promoters of anti-discrimination policy cite the relationship between discrimination and violence. A study by Steven F. Masser in the American Sociological review found "that nations with intense and pervasive discrimination will exhibit comparatively high levels of homicide."[4] However it is unclear if discrimination causes violence, if violence causes

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[1] "International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination." *OHCHR | Freedom of Religion: UN Expert Hails Albania, but Notes New Challenges and Unresolved Issues from the Past*, www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx.

[2] Sangharakshita. *Three Jewels Ii: 3*. Windhorse Publications, 2017. Book 1, verse 22.

[3] "Ignoring Historical Links to Modern Racism, Xenophobia Only Emboldens Extremist Ideologies, Experts Tell Third Committee, Calling for 'Honest Debate' | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases." *United Nations*, United Nations, www.un.org/press/en/2017/gashc4215.doc.htm.

[4] Messner, Steven F. "Economic Discrimination and Societal Homicide Rates: Further Evidence on the Cost of Inequality." *American Sociological Review*, vol. 54, no. 4, 1989, pp. 597–611. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2095881.

discrimination, or if both are true. Either way, a study of 34 admittedly western countries found 2219 incidents due to xenophobia or racism, of which 1450 were violent.[5] Some examples of this violence include, an event in 2016 where a group of Muslim refugees were attacked while attending a welcoming event in Canada, and the Mikhael Incident in 2011 where a journalist and cameraman were killed in a violent outbreak between Coptic protestors and the Egyptian Military.[6]

       A lot of this discrimination, such as the Mikhael Incident, is often related to religion. This intolerance is also increasing; a study ran by the Pew Research institute found that 42% of countries have high overall restrictions on religion in 2016. This is an increase from the 29% of countries which fit that category in 2007. This is still a form of intolerance.

       Discrimination has been one of the UN's primary focus' since its creation, and in this committee SOCHUM has been tasked with examining and detailing what it believes the UN's next steps should be.

Questions to consider:
1. Can the threat to national security override declarations against discrimination? Why or why not? What are situations in which this is reasonable?
2. What are some past actions your country has taken to either prevent/promote xenophobia?
3. How do the social norms compare to the laws and to the government's view of intolerance? What pushes more towards your country's goals on intolerance, social reform or legal reform?

Sources:
1. "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." *United Nations*, United Nations, www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/.
2. European Data Journalism Network. "Xenophobia in European Cities." *European Data Journalism Network*, www.europeandatajournalism.eu/News/Data-news/Xenophobia-in-European-cities.
3. *Bosnia and Herzegovina | OSCE - ODIHR*, hatecrime.osce.org/what-hate-crime/racism-and-xenophobia?year=2016.
4. *OHCHR | Freedom of Religion: UN Expert Hails Albania, but Notes New Challenges and Unresolved Issues from the Past*, www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cerd.aspx.
5. "The Parliament Magazine." *Solar Panels: EU Will Not Extend Anti-Dumping Measures*, www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/eu-monitoring/combatting-racism-xenophobia-and-homophobia.

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[5] "Hate Crime Reporting." *Racism and Xenophobia*, ODIHR, hatecrime.osce.org/what-hate-crime/racism-and-xenophobia?year=2016.

[6] Toma, Sally. "Patriotism and Nationalism in Egypt." *Atlantic Council*, www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/patriotism-and-nationalism-in-egypt.

6. "United Nations, Treaties."
   treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-2&chapter=4&lang=en#top.
7. Messner, Steven F. "Economic Discrimination and Societal Homicide Rates: Further Evidence on the Cost of Inequality." *American Sociological Review*, vol. 54, no. 4, 1989, pp. 597–611. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2095881.
8. Sangharakshita. *Three Jewels Ii: 3*. Windhorse Publications, 2017. Book 1, Verse 22
9. "The Indian Caste System Is Based on Racism." *The Times of India*, Business, 6 Feb. 2016, timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/jugglebandhi/the-indian-caste-system-is-based-on-racism/.

Topic 2: Human Trafficking

   Although slavery is generally thought of as a practice of the past, modern human trafficking is still a widespread issue. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), there were an approximated 40.3 million victims of human trafficking in 2016, including approximately 25 million in forced labor. This problem is particularly serious in regards to women's rights and treatment, as women and girls are disproportionately affected by forced labor, accounting for 99% of victims in the commercial sex industry, and 58% in other areas of labor.

   In the modern day, traffickers are able to bait and enslave their victims easily with the use of technology and online platforms, most commonly posing as potential employment opportunities such as modeling or waitressing for women, and jobs in construction or agriculture for men. After operating under the guise of another employment agency, traffickers abuse, threaten, and sell their victims into slavery. Victims of human trafficking are constantly manipulated, and are often forced to recruit or transport other victims. Because of this, sex trafficking victims who are caught are often charged and detained for criminal activity such as prostitution. The trauma that victims undergo throughout their enslavement is unimaginable. These individuals are exposed to the most distressing of situations and conditions, and are at an incredibly high risk of disease (STDs, HIV/AIDS), drug addiction, and malnutrition. These are most often a result of being exposed to drugs by the traffickers, being overused for sex and thus overexposed to sexually transmitted diseases, and being underfed by the traffickers. These life altering results of being treated incredibly poorly make the problem even more stark, and call further attention to the need for it to be solved.

   Modern human trafficking is an industry that acts on a global scale, with traffickers transporting victims across borders and seas to accommodate the growing demand. Modern slavery occurs in every region of the world, and according to a study conducted by the ILO in 2016, modern slavery was most prevalent in Africa (7.6 per 1,000 people), followed by Asia and the Pacific (6.1 per 1,000) then Europe and Central Asia (3.9 per 1,000). Due to the precedence this issue has on an international level, many countries have already taken action towards inhibiting the success of the traffickers in their gross and depraved operations. The global community's first attempt to bar human trafficking was in the International Agreement for the Suppression of White Slave Traffic, signed in 1904 by most European powers. Since then, the creation of the UN and SOCHUM have led to the sort of discourse on this issue that is an imperative step in solving this crisis. On December 10, 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, stating within Article 4 that "No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms." In terms of dealing with victims who are no longer enslaved, many countries also promote the existence of government-run programs that provide prompt access to support services and address their immediate and long-term needs.

   In the current global stage, human trafficking is more prevalent in developing communities, and it is also developing countries who are most often the least capable of solving

the issues given the lack of stable infrastructure. South America and the Caribbean are particularly troubled by human trafficking, as poverty coupled with crime has created a situation in which potential victims are most vulnerable. The same goes for Eastern Europe and Africa, who either lack powerful legislation, or have shown themselves as generally unwilling to implement stronger laws to target human trafficking. The demand for cheap labor in Asia leads to an inflated culture and hotbed for modern slavery. Keep in mind, while you are doing research on where your country stands, that while they may think it right to help, developed countries would have to bear a financial burden, and combating the issue is significantly more complicated in places with less government presence.

Questions to consider:
1. What are the root causes of the issue at hand? How can you address them? In what ways were they instituted?
2. What is there to be done now about such an issue? Is policy alone enough to amend the situation, or must the global community seek a more hands-on approach to solving this problem? Perhaps by means of incentivization?
3. What are the ways in which your country could offer aid to victims of human trafficking? What is the necessary infrastructure that would support those who have experienced or are experiencing this sort of traumatic violation of basic rights?

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"Sex Trafficking | Human Trafficking for Sex." *End Slavery Now*, www.endslaverynow.org/learn/slavery-today/sex-trafficking.

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"International Agreement for the Suppression of the "White Slave Traffic," published 18 May 1904, accessed 19 Nov 2018, http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/instree/whiteslavetraffic1904.html.