



*Boston University Academy Model United Nations Conference XIII*

*Saturday, February 1 to Sunday, February 2, 2025*

*Boston University Academy*

*Boston, MA*

## **MUN COMMITTEE:**

**Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee**

**(SOCHUM)**

***Background Guide***

## ***Introduction from the chair and vice-chair:***

Dear Delegates,

My name is Sebastian Juliano, and will be the chair for SOCHUM. I am currently a sophomore at BUA. As a freshman I was involved in BUAMUN and was a vice chair. I've been participating in Model UN conferences since 8th grade and have attended a variety of conferences. Outside of school, I play tennis, piano, and I recently picked up saxophone. I'm excited for our topics this year and look forward to meeting you all.

This is a general assembly, and will follow typical GA rules, with no unique or special actions. If this is your first conference or you aren't confident in your parliamentary procedure, we can set aside some time to go through it before starting. In regards to research, the background guides below are just a starting point. I have also included some guiding questions to help your research.

It is **strongly** recommended that you submit a position paper. This can help you organize your thoughts and goals, and in order to be eligible for awards you must submit one. It should explain your country's position and past actions. A larger guide to general formatting can be found below. We will open the conference with a speaker's list, so consider writing an opening speech. As a guideline, prepare for around 45 seconds, but depending on what you guys want that time may change.

If you have any questions, feel free to email me and Neil! See you in February!

Chair:

Vice-Chair:

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### **Equity and Inclusion Policy:**

BUAMUN has a strict policy against discriminatory or hateful speech of any kind. If a delegate, advisor, or staff member is found to have violated this rule, they will be asked to leave the conference without a refund and shall not be allowed to attend any other events during the weekend of BUAMUN. As part of this rule, BUAMUN prohibits discrimination in all of its communications and events on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, genetic information, or political beliefs. To report a concern, please contact a member of the Secretariat. For a complete list of rules, please see the [BUAMUN website](#).

BUAMUN awards will be given on the basis of the quality of a delegate's participation. The chairs will not choose awards based on how often a delegate speaks or how loudly they argue. It is important for all delegates to understand that the purpose of the Model UN is to work together with peers to find solutions to the world's issues, not to win awards for themselves.

### **Position Paper Information:**

This committee will require **two** formal Position Papers, emailed to the chair before the conference. You will write one Position Paper about each topic that will be further discussed in

the background guide. If you do not submit a Position Paper for one of the topics you will not win awards. A good Position Paper will influence whether you get an award or not. Your Position Papers must be about 1 page (a little more or a little less is fine, **double spaced**, size 12 in Times New Roman, and using MLA formatting. The structure of your position paper must be, as follows:

1. An introduction to the topic at hand. You must demonstrate that you have comprehension of the topic.
2. Your country's previous actions on and interactions with this topic.
3. Your country's solutions to the problem, based on your past actions
4. How you plan to work with other countries and delegates. Specifically, which countries do you think will be easy to work with to accomplish your goals during the committee.

\*\* Position papers should follow the following conventions on headers:

Delegate:

School:

Committee:

Position:

## **Committee Information:**

### **Topic 1: Treatment of refugees and displaced people in Yemen**

#### **Overview:**

The Yemeni Civil War began in 2014, when Houthi forces took the already destabilized capital, Sanaa, worsening the humanitarian situation in Yemen<sup>1</sup>. The lives of Yemen's civilians were already bad due to repeated uprisings and coups which have led to 4.5 million Yemeni being displaced internally. There is also famine and disease in the civilian population. This has led to violence in the streets, collapsing services, such as healthcare, and long-term displacement. Despite this, Yemen hosts more than 97,000 refugees and asylum seekers<sup>2</sup>. These issues have been exacerbated by recent events, such as the war in Ukraine, which raised global food prices.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Global Politics:**

The major sides in this war are “Iran-backed Houthi rebels, who overthrew the Yemeni government, are pitted against a multinational coalition led by Saudi Arabia”<sup>3</sup>. It has been called a proxy war and is not just a regional issue. The modern state was formed with the unification of the northern state, backed by the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, and the southern, Soviet-backed state. In the modern war, the U.S. is a major military benefactor, donating over 850 million U.S. dollars<sup>3</sup>. The Houthis are an Islamic fundamentalist group, following a form of Shia Islam, which it shares with Iran. This helped the Houthis gain Iran's support, not to mention Iran's rivalry with Saudi Arabia. They strongly oppose foreign interference in Yemen. Outside of Yemen, they have also

issued strikes on commercial ships in the Red Sea and have launched missiles and drones to Israel<sup>4,5</sup>.

### **Past Aid:**

The UN will need a massive amount of money in order to maintain sufficient humanitarian support. They have asked for donations totalling up to 2.7 billion dollars this year. Their mission goal is not just to create immediate humanitarian relief but to “build resilience, and also to fund sustainable interventions”<sup>6</sup>. In 2023 the UN also asked for support from all member nations. Unfortunately, they failed to receive enough money in pledges. The UN attempted to raise 4.3 billion dollars, but only received 1.2 billion dollars<sup>7</sup>.

### **Questions to Consider**

1. What are your country’s past positions on Yemen and other humanitarian crises?
2. What about their position on aid to other types of aid, such as disaster aid?
3. How could you protect aid workers from potential detainment and other hazards?
4. How would the aid money be distributed? Would you rather focus on immediate relief or long term infrastructure?

### **Works Cited:**

1:<https://www.britannica.com/event/Yemeni-Civil-War>

2:<https://www.unrefugees.org/news/yemen-crisis-explained/#WhendidthecrisisinYemenbegin?>

3:<https://www.cfr.org/background/yemen-crisis>

4:<https://www.npr.org/2023/12/05/1217056536/houthis-explainer-red-sea-yemen-saudi-middle-east-israel-gaza>

5:<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Houthi-movement>

6:<https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/02/1146142>

7:<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/un-raises-1-2-billion-for-yemen-humanitarian-crisis-far-below-its-2023-target>

## **Countries and Positions:**

1. USA - The U.S. has donated extensively in Yemen, in humanitarian aid and in military backing against the Houthis
2. Canada - Canada announced they were spending 43 million dollars in humanitarian aid to Yemen. In some statements, Canadian officials said they are focused on food-security
3. Saudi Arabia - In the summer of 2023, Saudi Arabia gave Yemen's presidential council 1.2 billion dollars to help save the government's economy. They are the most committed backer of the government based in Aden
4. UAE - The UAE has donated over 6 billion dollars to Yemen in humanitarian and developmental aid. They focused on COVID-19 when it was sweeping through Yemen
5. UK - The UK has donated over 1 billion pounds since 2015, but their supplied funds have decreased year by year
6. France - France has donated consistently, pledging over 11 million euros to aid
7. China - China has slowly adjusted its position towards the Saudi-backed state. They have been reluctant to intervene diplomatically, but have been a consistent supporter

8. Russia - Russia has been tied to the Houthi rebels for a while, and almost shipped arms to them before canceling last minute
9. India - India has consistently sent aid, especially in the form of food and medical care
10. Norway - Norway spent around NOK 250 million in 2023 supporting humanitarian aid
11. Oman - Oman being adjacent to Yemen has allowed it to send aid through trucks and other land transportation
12. Australia - The Aussies have sent over 72 million U.S. dollars in aid since 2017
13. Japan - Since 2017 Japan has sent 8.8 million U.S. dollars in aid
14. South Korea - In 2022 South Korea pledged 19 million U.S. dollars to Yemen
15. Sweden - Sweden has planned to stop aid in Yemen by 2025
16. Switzerland - Switzerland has led negotiations and peace talks, and sent CHF 14.5 million in 2023
17. Iran - Iran's aid has improved the military might of Yemen's Houthis.
18. Poland - Poland has been giving humanitarian aid, such as medical supplies and food.
19. Romania - Romania has not been involved much in aid to Yemen
20. Spain - Spain's been exporting weapons that have been used in the conflict in Yemen.

## **Topic 2: The protection of youths online**

### **Overview:**

As of 2025, the internet is the most powerful, yet dangerous, tool available to mankind. Over the past two decades, the web has become an integral part of the lives of young people. The vast amount of information on it has been critical to making key advancements in human knowledge.



Internet use among minors has increased over the past decade. In 2021, 97 percent of 3 to 18-year-olds had home internet access.<sup>1</sup> Its widespread use reflects its ability to shape how people think and view ideas. This ability can both be seen as positive and negative since the information's verity influences the conclusions we make. It has become incredibly easy to spread believable misinformation through tools such as artificial intelligence voice cloners.

The problem with a tool so diverse is that there is very little that can be done to control it. Once something is posted on the internet, it will stay there forever. This weakness has been exploited by bullies as a way to participate in peer-to-peer violence and cyberbullying. Without proper education, young children have no way of blocking unwanted people who try to communicate with them, such as cyber bullies and terrorist groups. The UN's Third Committee (SOCHUM) has stated that "Countless children and adolescents report being cyberbullied, and 20% of those people skip school because of it."<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps some of the most alarming misuses of the internet are child predation and human trafficking of youth.<sup>3</sup> Sexual exploitation has affected a record number of teens and children in the past year, becoming a source of wealth for criminals. The offenders are able to build up trust from their target and use it to gain information and blackmail. The internet's safety protocols aren't enough to keep people safe from hackers and cybercriminals. Child predation is also a widespread problem, with dangerous organizations stalking and trying to recruit youths. Social

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<sup>1</sup> *The NCES Fast Facts Tool provides quick answers to many education questions (National Center for Education Statistics)*. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Home Page, a part of the U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.).

<sup>2</sup> United Nations. (n.d.). *Child and youth safety online*. United Nations.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.dhs.gov/know2protect/know-the-threats>

media has kicked the doors open for such predators, as it is now easy for anyone to find and follow child accounts.

### **Actions taken to address internet safety:**

It has become a huge challenge for countries to keep people safe online due to the borderless characteristics of the internet. The UN is working to develop solutions and protections for internet usage. Due to the importance of this matter, several countries and organizations have also made laws and regulations to reduce negative effects of predation on social media.

The United Nations are promoting the spread of information regarding internet safety of children through the Child Online Protection (COP) initiative.<sup>4</sup> This includes working with technology and media companies through the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to implement safety and security measures that help keep children from harm. The focus of this initiative is to tackle issues such as cyberbullying, human trafficking and the access of unwanted and inappropriate content through the web.

The UN has given out information about how to deal with cyberbullying and peer pressure online. UNICEF has been working with big social media platforms to answer common questions about cyberbullying and how to safely avoid it. UNICEF realizes that “school-related violence in all its forms is an infringement of children and adolescents’ rights to education and health and

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<sup>4</sup> United Nations. (n.d.). *Child and youth safety online*. United Nations.

well-being.”<sup>5</sup> The UN has set the first Thursday of November to be the International Day Against Violence and Bullying as a way to raise awareness and be extra mindful about online crimes.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports cases of the sexual exploitation of minors online in order to more effectively help children. These reports are used to implement educational programs that provide information to families on what they can do for their children in such cases. Media corporations are also encouraged to recognize their responsibilities to the protection of children and are expected to implement regulations and algorithms that help reduce the amount of affected minors.

### **Questions to Consider**

1. How can the international community come together to form strict, safe guidelines for data protection and release of children online?
2. Which nations might agree on standardizing rules regarding internet or social media usage and safety?
3. How can the United Nations work to implement these guidelines and laws on a larger scale and extend its reach to an increased number of third world countries?
4. What role does each country play in the decision making process, and which countries are willing to contribute to the distribution of education and internet training for children?

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid

## **Bloc Positions:**

### 1) Countries with strict child protection laws

- Saudi Arabia
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom
- France
- China
- Russia
- Norway
- Australia
- South Korea
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Poland

### 2) Countries with more fluid child protection laws

- USA
- Canada
- India

- Oman
- Japan
- Iran
- Romania
- Spain