

BACKGROUND GUIDE

Introduction:

Greetings delegates of the UNHRC. My name is Aditya Muralishankar and I will be serving as your Chairperson for this conference. Long story short, I've been part of the MUN circuit for a good amount of time and my love for humanitarian committees and made me develop a certain panache for the very same. My vice chair is the very abled Nikhil Anand who is an upcoming MUNner in the circuit who will give you all a run for your money. I love active and respectful debate and I absolutely hate dominance and ego. You'll soon find out below that I absolutely do not endorse providing large and very informative background guides as I believe that most delegates will use it as their only source of research. I will be providing a very very brief summary or overview of the agendas and will provide a few reference links to things I deem important, so please, the burden of being the most well researched lies on your shoulders. Please, do not hesitate to approach me, I do not bite. All the very best, I hope you all do the best you can while I try my best not to mess up during committee, seems like a fair deal yeah?

Agenda 1:

Human Rights and Climate Change is a conceptual and legal framework under which international human rights and their relationship to global warming are studied, analyzed, and addressed. The framework has been employed by governments, United Nations organs, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, human rights and environmental advocates, and academics to guide national and international policy on climate change under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the core international human rights instruments.

Human rights and climate change analysis focuses on the anticipated consequences to humans associated with global environmental phenomena including sea level rise, desertification, temperature increases, extreme weather events, and changes in precipitation, as well as adaptation and mitigation measures taken by governments in response to those phenomena that may involve human rights or related legal protections.

In 2005, Inuit activist Sheila Watt-Cloutier filed a petition to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights seeking relief "from human rights violations resulting from the impacts of global warming and climate change caused by acts and omissions of the United States. The

petition was rejected, but the Commission invited and heard testimony on the relationship between human rights and climate change from representatives for the Inuit in 2007.

That same year, the Malé Declaration on the Human Dimension of Global Climate Change "stated explicitly (and for the first time in an international agreement) that 'climate change has clear and immediate implications for the full enjoyment of human rights' and called on the United Nations human rights system to address the issue as a matter of urgency.

In its 5th Assessment Report (2014), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) unequivocally confirmed that climate change is real and that human-made greenhouse gas emissions are its primary cause. The report identified the increasing frequency of extreme weather events and natural disasters, rising sea-levels, floods, heat waves, droughts, desertification, water shortages, and the spread of tropical and vector-borne diseases as some of the adverse impacts of climate change. These phenomena directly and indirectly threaten the full and effective enjoyment of a range of human rights by people throughout the world, including the rights to life, water and sanitation, food, health, housing, self-determination, culture and development.

The negative impacts of climate change are disproportionately borne by persons and communities already in disadvantageous situations owing to geography, poverty, gender, age, disability, cultural or ethnic background, among others, that have historically contributed the least to greenhouse gas emissions. In particular, persons, communities and even entire States that occupy and rely upon low-lying coastal lands, tundra and Arctic ice, arid lands, and other delicate ecosystems and at risk territories for their housing and subsistence face the greatest threats from climate change.

The negative impacts caused by climate change are global, contemporaneous and subject to increase exponentially according to the degree of climate change that ultimately takes place. Climate change, therefore, requires a global rights-based response. The Human Rights Council (HRC), its special procedures mechanisms, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights have sought to bring renewed attention to human rights and climate change through a series of resolutions, reports, and activities on the subject, and by advocating for a human rights based approach to climate change. The Preamble of the Paris Agreement to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change makes it clear that all States "should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights".

OHCHR's Key Messages on Human Rights and Climate Change

OHCHR's Key Messages on Human Rights and Climate Change highlight the essential obligations and responsibilities of States and other duty-bearers (including businesses) and

their implications for climate change-related agreements, policies, and actions. In order to foster policy coherence and help ensure that climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts are adequate, sufficiently ambitious, non-discriminatory and otherwise compliant with human rights obligations, the following considerations should be reflected in all climate action.

- ✓ To mitigate climate change and to prevent its negative human rights impacts
- ✓ To ensure that all persons have the necessary capacity to adapt to climate change
- ✓ To ensure accountability and effective remedy for human rights harms caused by climate change
- ✓ To mobilize maximum available resources for sustainable, human rights-based development
- ✓ International cooperation
- ✓ To ensure equity in climate action
- ✓ To guarantee that everyone enjoys the benefits of science and its applications
- ✓ To protect human rights from business harms
- ✓ To guarantee equality and non-discrimination
- ✓ To ensure meaningful and informed participation

Note: A case study must be done on the following: -

- Kiribati Crisis
- Refugee Convention
- [International Humanitarian Law](#)
- [Human Rights Law](#)

AGENDA 2: Protection of Human Rights while countering Terrorism

What are Human Rights?

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are considered entitled: the right to life, liberty, freedom of thought and expression, and equal treatment before the law, among others.

Such rights are ascribed naturally, which means that they are not earned and cannot be denied on the basis of race, creed, ethnicity or gender. These rights are often advanced as legal rights and protected by the rule of law. However, they are distinct from and prior to law, and can be used as standards for formulating or criticizing both local and international law. It is typically thought that the conduct of governments and military forces must comply with these standards.

Various basic rights that cannot be violated under any circumstances are set forth in international human rights documents such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The rights established by these documents include economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights.

While human rights are not always interpreted similarly across societies, these norms nonetheless form a common human rights vocabulary in which the claims of various cultures can be articulated. The widespread ratification of international human rights agreements such as those listed above is taken as evidence that these are widely shared values. Having human rights norms in place imposes certain requirements on governments and legitimizes the complaints of individuals in those cases where fundamental rights and freedoms are not respected. Such norms constitute a standard for the conduct of government and the administration of force. They can be used as "universal, non-discriminatory standards" for formulating or criticizing law and act as guidelines for proper conduct.

Many conflicts are sparked by a failure to protect human rights, and the trauma that results from severe human rights violations often leads to new human rights violations. As conflict intensifies, hatred accumulates and makes restoration of peace more difficult. In order to stop this cycle of violence, states must institute policies aimed at human rights protection. Many believe that the protection of human rights is essential to the sustainable achievement of the three agreed global priorities of peace, development and democracy. Respect for human rights has therefore become an integral part of international law and foreign policy. The specific goal of expanding such rights is to increase safeguards for the dignity of the person.

Despite what resembles a widespread consensus on the importance of human rights and the expansion of international treaties on such matters, the protection of human rights still often leaves much to be desired. Although international organizations have been created or utilized to embody these values, there is little to enforce the commitments states have made to human rights. Military intervention is a rare occurrence. Sanctions have a spotty track record of effectiveness. Although not to be dismissed as insignificant, often the only consequence for failing to protect human rights is naming and shaming.

Aftermath of Conflicts:

In the aftermath of conflict, violence and suspicion often persist. Government institutions and the judiciary, which bear the main responsibility for the observation of human rights, are often severely weakened by the conflict or complicit in it. Yet, a general improvement in the human rights situation is essential for rehabilitation of war-torn societies. Many argue that healing the psychological scars caused by atrocities and reconciliation at the

community level cannot take place if the truth about past crimes is not revealed and if human rights are not protected. To preserve political stability, human rights implementation must be managed effectively. Issues of mistrust and betrayal must be addressed, and the rule of law must be restored. In such an environment, the international community can often play an important supporting role in providing at least implicit guarantees that former opponents will not abandon the peace. Because all international norms are subject to cultural interpretation, external agents that assist in the restoration of human rights in post-conflict societies must be careful to find local terms with which to express human rights norms. While human rights are in theory universal, ideas about which basic needs should be guaranteed vary according to cultural, political, economic and religious circumstances. Consequently, policies to promote and protect human rights must be culturally adapted to avoid distrust and perceptions of intrusion into internal affairs.

Protection of human Rights while countering Terrorism:

We live in a conflicted world filled with mass terrorism and the need to kill. We are surrounded today by various extremist groups who follow different sets of propaganda to preach their culture, tradition or religion. These groups are filled with influential figures who are brought up with the mindset of seeing death and killing as a means to initiate teaching and philosophy. Terrorism in the world today plays a huge role in shaping the balance of life. Mass murders are carried out even today where hundreds of thousands of people are brutally killed, raped and even tortured to unexplainable means. Terrorism as rightly said, has no religion and has no base. It is built up by people who follow an extremist view on various ideals and cults of life. Radical Islam for example is a way by means of which, violence is promoted in order to propagate and preach the word of Islam which is contradictory to what the actual Quran says. Confliction stands as a tool today used by millions to take away lives which are not their own. Terrorists have no humanity when it comes to life. They follow rules, they are not taught to show mercy, compassion, love or care. They are simply required to follow rules with a promise that they would be given salvation by their God and that they would be rewarded for their actions.

Under International Law, humans come under several Conventions and Laws in order to safeguard and protect their basic rights. Whether it is with regard to women, children, armed conflict, war etc; we are unilaterally bound by international regulations to protect our liberties and freedoms. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states the same with regards to basic rights being granted to every individual irrespective of their caste, creed, race, religion, sex etc. Although humans by nature, terrorists do not follow any mandate, neither do they accept human rights. They do not strive by methods of equality, liberty, freedom. They are not bound by International Regulations and standards because they feel that violence and death is equality in itself in order to promote their faith, ideal or tradition. They choose to just break international law and use threat, violence, force and death as a way to install fear in the hearts of the innocent.

What we as a committee must understand here is that terrorism does not follow law or rules. They tend to do the exact opposite. Terrorists are not concerned with equality, humanity, liberty, freedom etc. They do not follow the mandate of the Universal Declaration of Human rights as they feel that their own personal propaganda is far superior and far more logical to install ideologies and images in the minds of millions. We must understand that international law cannot restrict terrorists in their cruel actions, but we as humans must do what we are bound by and that is to protect the rights of people and safeguard their lives. Each and every life is as valuable as the other and as precious as the other. We are all equal irrespective of caste, creed or religion.

Promotion of human rights standards and awareness-raising are very important in the aftermath of terrorist attacks. In a context in which some are willing to forfeit human rights for the sake of presumed security, NHRs have the possibility and the duty to be vocal and to stress that there cannot be security without human rights, the protection of which is part of the solution rather than of the problem.

Terrorism constitutes a serious threat to human rights and democracy. While actions by states in necessary to prevent and effectively sanction terrorist acts, not all means are justifiable. There is a compelling duty for states to protect the general interest of public security and the rule of law without jeopardizing the core of human rights which are enshrined notably in the European Convention on Human rights.

As a debatable topic, we need to strike fear in the hearts of terrorists, not by the same violence but by alternative means. Countering terrorism in today's world is probably the most deliberated issue anyone could talk of. The ISIS for example poses a huge threat to the lives of many, although about 2 million residents in Iraq have accepted their superiority, there are several million who cannot accept them as a guiding force. They cannot accept an extremist group to regulate government activities by the use of violence and threat. The ISIS today has spread across multiple Middle Eastern nations and has been an imminent threat to the lives of many. They resort to violence to spread the name of Allah and proclaim their actions to be driven by the word of God. Today, we as a global community are faced with a huge crisis. Multiple rights are violated. People do not have basic food, clothing and shelter. They are beaten and bruised. Some are killed and raped. Others are beheaded. They are tortured to inhumane extremes and left to die. Poverty is on the rise and as the second passes by, lives are lost and a human breathes their last. That which at first started as the Al – Qaeda in Iraq went on to become after the Iraqi insurgency, the Mujahideen Shura Council. Today it has transformed into the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant. A terrorist group which ceases to stop spreading their ideologies until they have established a universal Islamic State

As a committee, the executive board expects delegates to protect individual rights, while countering terrorism. The delegates are expected to come up with solutions to protect human rights under international law while finding solutions to combat and counter terrorists and their evil ideologies.

