

# WESMUN 2021

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**BACKGROUND GUIDE**

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# Chair's Welcome

Dear delegates,

It is our pleasure to welcome you to the WESMUN's General Assembly. As your chairs for the committee Emily and I are excited to facilitate a rousing two days of debate and diplomatic maneuvering. As the chairs of this committee we fully expect delegates to come prepared to advocate for their respective countries in rigorous discourse and to do their utmost to move resolution forward. Before you go through the substantive part of the background guide below please allow us to introduce ourselves.

My name is Emily Yang and I will be your vice-chair for the General Assembly. This is my fourth year involved with Model United Nations. I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience of participating in various conferences, including UTMUN, OMUN, HMUN, and international conferences such as WFUNA. I have represented countries all around the world and debated numerous controversial topics. I hope you enjoy as much joy and learning as I had through MUN and I look forward to an interesting debate in this committee!

My name is Oscar Dimanov and I will be your chair for the General Assembly. Last year I had the distinct pleasure of leading WESMUN as a Co-Secretary-General and the year prior I was introduced to the club through acting as the Under-Secretary-General of Logistics. Throughout my time at Western Model United Nations I have attended numerous conferences both domestically and internationally to explore my passion for debate and international affairs. My time at the club has been nothing short of extraordinary and I hope that you will all thoroughly enjoy revisiting the landmark Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For a document that was drafted in the late 1940's the declaration still stands today as a testament for what all UN members should strive to attain. However, given all the time that has passed since the document was drafted it is time to update and improve upon the declaration.

# Introduction and Background

## PART 1

In order for delegates to examine the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 it is critical to understand not only the document itself but the surrounding historical context in which it was conceived. Moreover, having an appreciation for just how profoundly the Declaration has impacted the world in the time since it's passing is vital to altering it. Simply reading the original Declaration is not enough to understand the surrounding context. In order to develop a reasonable policy position for each country delegates must understand not only how their country views the original Declaration but also what human rights are in their country on a domestic level. Below delegates will find the historical context around the 1948 Declaration, a link to the Declaration and possible changes that could be pursued to the document. Please note that these are only suggestions and that delegates are strongly encouraged to go beyond what is listed below.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948, was the result of the experience of the Second World War. With the end of that war, and the creation of the United Nations, the international community vowed never again to allow atrocities like those of that conflict happen again. World leaders decided to complement the UN Charter with a road map to guarantee the rights of every individual everywhere. The document they considered, and which would later become the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, was taken up at the first session of the General Assembly in 1946.

The Assembly reviewed this draft Declaration on Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms and transmitted it to the Economic and Social Council "for reference to the Commission on Human Rights for consideration . . . in its preparation of an international bill of rights." The Commission, at its first session early in 1947, authorized its members to formulate what it termed "a preliminary draft International Bill of Human Rights". Later the work was taken over by a formal drafting committee, consisting of members of the Commission from eight States, selected with due regard for geographical distribution.

# Introduction and Background

The Commission on Human Rights was made up of 18 members from various political, cultural and religious backgrounds. Eleanor Roosevelt, widow of American President Franklin D. Roosevelt, chaired the UDHR drafting committee. With her were René Cassin of France, who composed the first draft of the Declaration, the Committee Rapporteur Charles Malik of Lebanon, Vice-Chairman Peng Chung Chang of China, and John Humphrey of Canada, Director of the UN's Human Rights Division, who prepared the Declaration's blueprint. But Mrs. Roosevelt was recognized as the driving force for the Declaration's adoption.

The Commission met for the first time in 1947. In her memoirs, Eleanor Roosevelt recalled:

"Dr. Chang was a pluralist and held forth in charming fashion on the proposition that there is more than one kind of ultimate reality. The Declaration, he said, should reflect more than simply Western ideas and Dr. Humphrey would have to be eclectic in his approach. His remark, though addressed to Dr. Humphrey, was really directed at Dr. Malik, from whom it drew a prompt retort as he expounded at some length the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. Dr. Humphrey enthusiastically joined in the discussion, and I remember that at one point Dr. Chang suggested that the Secretariat might well spend a few months studying the fundamentals of Confucianism!"

The final draft by Cassin was handed to the Commission on Human Rights, which was being held in Geneva. The draft declaration sent out to all UN member States for comments became known as the Geneva draft.

The underlying structure of the Universal Declaration was influenced by the Code Napoléon, including a preamble and introductory general principles. Its final structure took form in the second draft prepared by French jurist René Cassin, who worked on the initial draft prepared by Canadian legal scholar John Peters Humphrey.

The Declaration consists of the following:

- The preamble sets out the historical and social causes that led to the necessity of drafting the Declaration.
- Articles 1–2 established the basic concepts of dignity, liberty, and equality
- .Articles 3–5 established other individual rights, such as the right to life and the prohibition of slavery and torture.

- Articles 6–11 refer to the fundamental legality of human rights with specific remedies cited for their defence when violated.
- Articles 12–17 established the rights of the individual towards the community, including freedom of movement.
- Articles 18–21 sanctioned the so-called "constitutional liberties" and spiritual, public, and political freedoms, such as freedom of thought, opinion, religion and conscience, word, and peaceful association of the individual.
- Articles 22–27 sanctioned an individual's economic, social and cultural rights, including healthcare. It upholds an expansive right to a standard of living, provides for additional accommodations in case of physical debilitation or disability, and makes special mention of care given to those in motherhood or childhood.
- Articles 28–30 established the general means of exercising these rights, the areas in which the rights of the individual cannot be applied, the duty of the individual to society, and the prohibition of the use of rights in contravention of the purposes of the United Nations Organisation. Please examine the original Declaration [here](#).

Please examine the original Declaration [here](#)

The first draft of the Declaration was proposed in September 1948 with over 50 Member States participating in the final drafting. By its resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948, the General Assembly, meeting in Paris, adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with eight nations abstaining from the vote but none dissenting.

The UDHR is considered groundbreaking for providing a comprehensive and universal set of principles in a secular, apolitical document that explicitly transcends cultures, religions, legal systems, and political ideologies. Its claim to universality has been described as "boundlessly idealistic" and the "most ambitious feature". The Declaration was the first instrument of international law to use the phrase "rule of law", thereby establishing the principle that all members of all societies are equally bound by the law regardless of the jurisdiction or political system.

One scholar estimates that at least 90 national constitutions drafted since the Declaration's adoption in 1948 "contain statements of fundamental rights which, where they do not faithfully reproduce the provisions of the Universal Declaration, are at least inspired by it." At least 20 African nations that attained independence in the decades immediately following 1948 explicitly referenced the UDHR in their constitutions. As of 2014, the constitutions that still directly cite the Declaration are those of Afghanistan, Benin, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Guinea, Haiti, Mali, Mauritania, Nicaragua, Niger, Portugal, Romania, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Somalia, Spain, Togo and Yemen. Moreover, the constitutions of Portugal, Romania, Sao Tome and Principe, and Spain compel their courts to "interpret" constitutional norms consistently with the Universal Declaration.

Judicial and political figures in many nations have directly invoked the UDHR as an influence or inspiration on their courts, constitutions, or legal codes. Indian courts have ruled the Indian Constitution "[embodies] most of the articles contained in the Declaration". Nations as diverse as Antigua, Chad, Chile, Kazakhstan, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Zimbabwe have derived constitutional and legal provisions from the Declaration. In some cases, specific provisions of the UDHR are incorporated or otherwise reflected in national law. The right to health or to protection of health is found in the constitutions of Belgium, Kyrgyzstan, Paraguay, Peru, Thailand, and Togo; constitutional obligations on the government to provide health services exist in Armenia, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Finland, South Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Paraguay, Thailand, and Yemen.

Most Muslim-majority countries that were then members of the UN signed the Declaration in 1948, including Afghanistan, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, and Syria; Turkey, which had an overwhelmingly Muslim population but an officially secular government, also voted in favor. Saudi Arabia was the sole abstainer on the Declaration among Muslim nations, claiming that it violated Sharia law. Pakistan, officially an Islamic republic, signed the declaration and critiqued the Saudi position, strongly arguing in favour of including freedom of religion.



## Introduction to the topic

Given the age of the original document it is important for the United Nations to revisit and alter it to better reflect the changes the world has undergone over the last 73 years. The Declaration may not have the same characteristics of domestic law but it is in the same scope meant to reflect the current cultural values of the world. Hence, all member states have a marked interest in changes, removing or adding to the original document. With this mind, delegates are strongly encouraged to look for inspiration beyond the ideas presented below.

Possible New Rights to be Included:

### 1. Lack of Islamic states' Values

In 1948, Saudi Arabia did not sign the UDHR, arguing that it violated Islamic law and criticized it for failing to consider the cultural and religious context of non-Western countries. In response to the criticism, 45-member states of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) adopted the Cairo Declaration of Human Rights in Islam (CDHRI) on August 5, 1990. Despite its claim to be a general guidance for member states of OIC and complement the UDHR, it undermines many of the rights the UDHR is supposed to guarantee. CDHRI removes the universality that underpins the UDHR and provides its 45 signatories and all of their citizens a set of human rights based on an interpretation of Shari's law. Many scholars think that CDHRI obviously limits the rights listed in the UDHR and the International Covenants, thus cannot be regarded as complementary to UDHR. How to make UDHR a less "western civilized" document remains to be a controversial issue.

### 2. The Right to Refuse to Kill

Groups like Amnesty International and War Resisters International have urged for "The Right to Refuse to Kill" to be added to UDHR. According to International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the United Nations Human Rights Committee, a Conscientious Objector (CO) is an "individual [who has] claimed the right to refuse to perform military service" on the grounds of freedom of thought, conscience, or religion. This right is applicable to both citizens and active members of the armed forces and covers both peace and war periods. In practice, COs usually perform duties by an alternative civil service instead of being part of a troop.



However, COs still face persecution and imprisonment nowadays. In some countries, it is impossible for CO to put into practice due to conscriptions or professional soldiers during their service. Cases of imprisonment persist in Finland, Germany, and Turkey. Turkey and EU candidate countries are still refusing to recognize CO to military service. Therefore, even in Europe, which is the portrayed champion of Human Rights, still need more work to be done.

### 3. Technology's impacts on Human Rights

During the last century, technology advancements have rapidly evolved. In practice, technology drives further debates into human rights. For example, the use of satellite data can monitor the flow of displaced people; artificial intelligence can assist with recognition to gather data on rights abuses; and the use of forensic technology can reconstruct crime scenes to hold criminals accountable. However, technological developments can have equal capacity to undermine efforts as well. From authoritarian states monitoring political dissidents through surveillance technologies, to the use of technique "deepfakes" in creating faked news and financial fraud. It is crucial to consider the ethical and policy-oriented implications when it comes to human rights.

### 4. Threats to Journalism and the Spread of Misinformation

The concept of "fake news" has become a pressing issue as more information is shared around the world. Fake news, defined as misinformation and propaganda, causes divisions and endangers free press. Journalists face threatening obstacles and dangers to their work and lives. According to Reporters without Borders, 2018 was the worst year on record for journalists. With the rising trend of nationalism in US, China, and Turkey, free press remains a big issue. Although the UDHR has covered "freedom to opinion and expression" in Article 19, not much effort was put into the rights and protection offered to journalists. In addition, a lack of legal framework that can be used to recognize and sanction fake news or misinformation is another concern that is threatening people's rights to access truth.

### 5. Climate Change

Climate change has become one of the biggest concerns in our generation, which is a situation that cannot be forecasted in 1948 when constructing the UDHR. The right to a healthy environment is recognized in law by at least 155 Member States. Failure to take adequate steps to address climate change may constitute a violation of right to a healthy environment.

Governments have an obligation to take effective measures to mitigate climate change. This includes preventing potential violation of rights by third parties, especially businesses. More importantly, there is also the call for low-income countries to contribute their fair share towards the cost of mitigation and adaptation in low-income countries, as countries are not equally responsible for the climate crisis. The conclusion is that first, climate change and its impact threaten a broad range of human rights; and second, states and private actors have extensive human rights obligations and responsibilities.

## PART 3

# Removing Certain Rights

The Declaration has stirred some controversies since its adoption, and the resistance to the Declaration has only increased in the last few decades. The eight countries that abstained on the final vote were the Soviet Union and the five Soviet bloc states that were U.N. members at the time. For example, South Africa, whose apartheid regime cannot bear any declaration condemning racial discrimination, also abstained.

The most significant objections to the Declaration have been in the Islamic states, which mainly focus on the articles concerning marriage, family, and religious freedom. For instance, regarding Article 16, the delegate of Saudi Arabia once proposed that the laws of each country should govern marriage rights, rather than a uniform standard, and suggested replacing the term “equal rights” with “full rights as defined in the marriage laws of their country”. As to Article 18, Saudi Arabia presented the position of upholding freedom of religion and conscience, opposing the explicit inclusion of the right to change one’s religion since Islamic states have clear restrictions that its citizens must uphold Islamic beliefs. He also criticized the most part of the Declaration being drafted based on western civilization only.

The difficulty of promoting worldwide human rights agreement these days must deal with growing nationalism in many countries. The most ambitious feature of the Declaration was its claim to be applicable to any cultures, political systems, and religious traditions around the world. These “over-universal” articles have risen heated debates about its possibility of removal.

# PART 5

## Countries

### CANADA:

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms sets out those rights and freedoms that Canadians believe are necessary in a free and democratic society. The Charter is one part of the Canadian Constitution, which is a set of laws containing the basic rules about how our country operates. The Constitution is Canada's most important law because it can render invalid any laws that are inconsistent with it.

### DENMARK:

Human rights in the Kingdom of Denmark are protected by the state's Constitution of the Realm (Danmarks Riges Grundlov); applying equally in Denmark proper, Greenland and the Faroe Islands, and through the ratification of international human rights treaties.

### GERMANY:

Human rights in Germany enjoy a high level of protection, both in theory and in practice, and are enshrined in the Grundgesetz. The country has ratified most international human rights treaties.

### BRAZIL:

Human rights in Brazil include the right to life and freedom of speech; and condemnation of slavery and torture. The nation ratified the American Convention on Human Rights.

## CHINA:

Human rights in mainland China is periodically reviewed by the United Nations Human Rights Committee (UNHRC), on which the government of the People's Republic of China and various foreign governments and human rights organizations have often disagreed. PRC authorities, their supporters, and other proponents claim that existing policies and enforcement measures are sufficient to guard against human rights abuses.

## FRANCE:

Human rights in France are contained in the preamble of the Constitution of the French Fifth Republic, founded in 1958, and the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. France has also ratified the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the European Convention on Human Rights 1960 and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000).

## BELGIUM:

According to international observers, human rights in Belgium are generally respected and the law and the judiciary provides effective means of addressing individual instances of abuse. However, some concerns have been reported by international human rights officials over the treatment of asylum seekers, prison overcrowding and the banning of full face veils

## EGYPT:

Human rights in Egypt are guaranteed by the Egyptian Constitution under the various articles of Chapter 3. The country is also a party to numerous international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. However, the state of human rights in the country has been criticized both in the past and the present, especially by foreign human rights organizations such as Amnesty International.

## HAITI:

According to its Constitution and written laws, Haiti meets most international human rights standards. In practice, many provisions are not respected. The government's human rights record is poor. Political killings, kidnapping, torture, and unlawful incarceration are common unofficial practices, especially during periods of coups or attempted coups.

## ICELAND:

The Icelandic Constitution sets out the human rights which the country's citizens are to enjoy. The Constitution takes precedence over other legislation, which must comply with the provisions of the former. Legislation which fails to do so can be judged invalid by the courts.

## IRAN:

The state of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran has been criticized both by Iranians and international human right activists, writers, and NGOs. The United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Commission have condemned prior and ongoing abuses in Iran in published critiques and several resolutions.

## ISRAEL:

Israel is seen as being more politically free and democratic than neighboring countries in the Middle East. According to the 2015 US Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Israel faces significant human rights problems regarding institutional discrimination of Arab citizens of Israel (many of whom self-identify as Palestinian), Ethiopian Israelis and women, and the treatment of refugees and irregular migrants. Other human rights problems include institutional discrimination against non-Orthodox Jews and intermarried families, and labor rights abuses against foreign workers.

## JAPAN:

It has no law against racial, ethnic, or religious discrimination, or discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and accepts an extremely small number of refugees each year. Japan also has no national human rights institutions.

## IRAQ:

According to the Human Rights Watch annual report, the human rights situation in Iraq is deplorable. Since 2015, the country entered a bloody armed conflict between ISIS and coalition of Kurdish, central Iraqi government forces, pro-government militias, and a United States-led international air campaign.

## LIBYA:

Militias, armed groups and security forces committed serious violations of international humanitarian law, including war crimes. Fighting in and around Tripoli between forces and militias loyal to the Government of National Accord (GNA) and the Libyan National Army (LNA) killed scores of civilians, injured hundreds more and displaced tens of thousands. Militias, armed groups and security forces suppressed freedom of expression by harassing, abducting and attacking politicians, journalists, human rights defenders and other activists; one journalist was unlawfully killed and 10 others arbitrarily detained. The Libyan authorities failed to protect women from gender-based violence at the hands of militias and armed groups. Intimidation, threats and violence against lawyers and judges by armed groups and militias seriously undermined the judicial system. The situation for tens of thousands of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants remained bleak, as they were exposed to arbitrary arrest and abduction by militias and were regularly the victims of human trafficking and abuses by criminal groups. Mauritania is a highly centralized Islamic republic with no legal provisions for freedom of religion. Amnesty International has further accused the Mauritania legal system of functioning with a complete disregard of legal procedure, fair trial, or humane imprisonment. Amnesty International also has accused the Mauritanian government of an institutionalized and continuous use of torture for decades

## NEPAL:

Nepalese people face discrimination based on ethnicity, caste, and gender, and citizens living in rural parts of Nepal face a lack of access to adequate health care, education, and other resources. Violence continues to plague the country, particularly towards women. Economic inequality is prevalent, and health issues persist— including high child mortality rates in some areas, mental illness, and insufficient health care services

## NETHERLANDS:

Netherlands is often at or near the head in international civil liberties and political rights rankings. Still, per year there are about 6,000 victims of and 100 convictions for human trafficking. In addition, the refugee crisis remains a lasting impact on Netherlands. Forcible returns to Afghanistan continued. Security measures used in the context of the counter-terrorism strategy continued to be a pressing concern.

## PAKISTAN:

The government failed to uphold its commitments to legislate against torture and enforced disappearances. Violence against women and girls remained widespread. Parliament blocked attempts to restrict child marriage. Religious minorities continued to be prosecuted under blasphemy laws and attacked by non-state actors. The fight for climate justice took to the streets, with popular mobilizations in major cities calling on the government to show leadership both at home and abroad for one of the world's most climate-vulnerable countries. Air pollution reached hazardous levels in major cities, posing risks to people's rights to health, life and, in the case of children, education.

## REPUBLIC OF KOREA:

The Constitutional Court ruled that criminalization of abortion was unconstitutional. An alternative to military service was enacted after the Constitutional Court's decision in 2018. At the end of the year, the Constitutional Court was again discussing the death penalty. Article 92-6 of the Military Criminal Act, which the UN and some member states had recommended be repealed, was still in effect. Under this law, LGBTI people in the military were subjected to discrimination and stigmatization and faced violence and harassment due to the criminalization of consensual sex between adult men.



## RUSSIAN FEDERATION:

Russia's human rights record continued to deteriorate, with the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly consistently restricted, in law and practice. Human rights defenders and NGOs were targeted via the laws on “foreign agents” and “undesirable organisations”. Other vulnerable minorities also faced discrimination and persecution. Counter-terrorism provisions were widely used to target dissent across the country and in Crimea. A draft law on domestic violence tabled at the parliament provoked heated opposition from conservative groups and threats against its proponents. Refugees were forcibly returned to destinations where they were at risk of torture.

## TURKEY:

Thousands of people were held in lengthy and punitive pre-trial detention, often without any credible evidence of their having committed any crime recognizable under international law. There were severe restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and people considered critical of the current government – in particular journalists, political activists and human rights defenders – were detained or faced trumped-up criminal charges. Turkey forcibly returned Syrian refugees, while continuing to host more refugees than any other country.

## SAUDI ARABIA:

The authorities escalated repression of the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly..The authorities used the death penalty extensively, carrying out scores of executions for a range of crimes, including drug offences. Members of the country's Shi'a minority were executed following grossly unfair trials. The authorities implemented major reforms to the repressive male guardianship system, including allowing women to obtain passports, travel without the permission of a male guardian and become heads of households; however, women continued to face systematic discrimination in law and practice in other areas and remained inadequately protected against sexual and other violence. The authorities granted hundreds of thousands of foreign nationals the right to work and access to education and health care, but arrested and deported hundreds of thousands of irregular migrant workers.

## SOMALIA:

The authorities cracked down on critics, including journalists, and opposition members stifling their rights to freedom of expression and assembly, in some cases using excessive force resulting in deaths. Al-Shabaab also severely restricted journalists' ability to work. Sexual violence against women and girls remained widespread. Conflict, drought and floods displaced more than 300,000 people. Over 2.6 million displaced people remained at risk of exploitation and abuse. Impunity for human rights violations was widespread.

## SOUTH AFRICA:

The Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture continued to hear testimonies regarding allegations of "state capture" under former president Jacob Zuma's government after he was removed from office in February 2018 by the ruling African National Congress (ANC). Profound inequalities remain in the country, further undermining economic, social and cultural rights, including health services with shortage of medicines like ARVs for people living with HIV/AIDS. Drought, exacerbated by climate change, continued to threaten the right to livelihoods for millions, as food prices, driven by fuel increases, continued to rise throughout the year.

## SWITZERLAND:

A new accelerated asylum procedure came into force. A study giving detailed figures on the extent of sexual violence against women was published, initiating a broad discussion on women's rights and sexual violence.

## UNITED KINGDOM:

Counter-terrorism laws continued to restrict rights. Full accountability for torture allegations against UK intelligence agencies and armed forces remained unrealized. Northern Ireland made significant progress on abortion and same-sex marriage.

## UKRAINE:

Intimidation and attacks by groups advocating discrimination against marginalised minorities and rights activists continued, although more public assemblies by activists were protected by police. Progress in bringing to justice those suspected of past attacks against activists and journalists was reported only in some high-profile cases. New initiatives were put in place to address gender-based violence, but their practical impact was undermined by a lack of political will or resources for implementation. Territories in eastern Ukraine (Donbas) were controlled by Russian-backed separatists and remained inaccessible to many civil society and humanitarian actors.

## UNITED STATES:

In 2019, the Trump administration launched discriminatory attacks, through both policy and practice, against the human rights of some of the most vulnerable individuals and communities in the USA. At the national and international levels, the US government sought to narrow human rights protections for sexual and reproductive rights and protections against discrimination for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people and others. At the US-Mexico border, in violation of national and international laws, the US authorities detained, ill-treated and turned away tens of thousands of asylum-seekers who requested international protection. As a result, unaccompanied children, families, LGBTI people and others faced abuses once stranded in northern Mexico as well as in US immigration detention centres.

## VENEZUELA:

Venezuela continued to experience an unprecedented human rights crisis. Extrajudicial executions, arbitrary detentions, excessive use of force and unlawful killings by the security forces continued as part of a policy of repression to silence dissent. The political and institutional crisis deepened in the first months of the year, resulting in heightened tensions between the Executive under Nicolás Maduro and the Legislature headed by Juan Guaidó. Growing social protest was met with a wide range of human rights violations and an intensification of the policy of repression by the authorities. Prisoners of conscience faced unfair criminal proceedings. Freedom of assembly and expression remained under constant threat. Human rights defenders were stigmatized and faced increasing obstacles in carrying out their work.

# YEMEN:

All parties to the conflict in Yemen committed serious violations of international humanitarian law. Huthi forces, which controlled large parts of the country, indiscriminately shelled residential neighbourhoods in Yemen and launched missiles indiscriminately into Saudi Arabia. The coalition led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which supported the internationally recognized Yemeni government, continued to bomb civilian infrastructure and carry out indiscriminate attacks, killing and injuring hundreds of civilians. All parties to the conflict suppressed freedom of expression, using arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance and torture and other ill-treatment. Those targeted included journalists, human rights defenders and members of the Baha'i community. Children were sexually assaulted with impunity. The conflict continued to have a disproportionate impact on people with disabilities.

## PART 6

### Closing

Delegates the task before this committee requires diligent and conscientious work. The results this committee produces will remain for the next 80 years as a renewed beacon of hope and human dignity. Please go further than the materials presented to you above. Research unique and interesting human rights to propose and have a firm grasp of where each country stands on the debate. Critically, as the chairs of this committee we would like to emphasize that respective debate is what Model United Nations is built upon. This means that irrespective of the topics being discussed delegates treat each other with the same sense of dignity and esteem as they would in real life. More specifically, advocating for one's policy in debate can mean disagreeing with social conventions in Canada but it must be handled with care. In this committee it is fully expected that certain countries will be reluctant to accept LGBTQ+ protections in debate. However, the delegates of these countries must adhere to respectful discourse and avoid any outlashish statements. Any perceived violation of this goodwill will result in removal from the conference.

# Questions to Consider

1. How to incorporate values and cultural considerations from Islamic and Middle East states into UDHR?
2. With the rise of nationalism in many countries, how can countries uphold a universal standard of human rights?
3. What articles do your country want to add or remove from the UDHR? How can you make this change a common understanding with other member states?
4. How do the issues at hand relate to your country specifically? What is your country's foreign and domestic policy on human rights?
5. How to encourage signatories of the UDHR to enact the articles listed in the Declaration?
6. What are the potential penalties or consequences countries may face in violation of UDHR?

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