

Dartmouth Model United Nations

United Nations Human Rights Council

April 7 – 9, 2017





DARTMOUTH MODEL UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE

Twelfth Annual Conference • April 7 - 9, 2017

Dartmouth College • Rockefeller Center • Hanover, NH 03755

E-mail: dartmun@dartmouth.edu • DartmouthMUN.com

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January 11, 2017

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*Director of
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*Director of
Technology*

Eva Wang
*Director of
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Dear Delegates:

On behalf of the entire Dartmouth Model United Nations staff, I would like to welcome and thank you for registering for the twelfth annual Dartmouth Model United Nations conference this April 2017. We have been working relentlessly since the end of last year's conference to provide a better and more worthwhile Model U.N. experience for this winter's delegates. We are optimistic about this winter's conference and Dartmouth Model U.N.'s future.

DartMUN is a unique conference. We pair world-class delegations and dais staff members in smaller, more-interactive environments to facilitate an enriching experience for delegates of all skill levels. We believe DartMUN's active, small committees ensure delegates feel comfortable immersing themselves in a competitive but supportive environment that encourages trial by error and participation.

Furthermore, DartMUN's well-trained staff is excited to work with your delegates this winter in committee to equip the next generation of college students with the skills to tackle complex global problems.

With this said, Model United Nations is only meaningful when delegates are thoroughly prepared. To aid in your research preparation, your committee staff has spent hours researching, writing, and editing this Background Guide. The Background Guide serves as an introduction to your respective committee and an overview of the topics that you will be debating over the course of the conference.

The Background Guide is intended to be a starting point for your research and is not, in itself, an adequate exposure to the complexities of your committee's topics. To be prepared, each delegate should do further research and focus on processing information through the lens of their respective country or position. If you are having trouble digesting all the information, the Background Guide contains relevant discussion questions that break down the topics. Also, as questions or ideas arise, do not be shy in contacting your committee staff via e-mail. Committee staff are knowledgeable and can help you better understand a particular topic or how your country fits into a larger international debate. More often than not, discussing the problem with another person can open up more paradigms and viewpoints that may guide you throughout the brainstorming process.

As in years past, all delegates are expected to write a brief position paper before the conference to synthesize all of their preparatory research and analysis. Please see the position paper guidelines on the conference website for specific information about content, format, etc. Committee staff will collect position papers at the beginning of the first committee session on Friday evening, so be sure to bring a hard copy because delegates who do not submit position papers will not be eligible for awards.



Sincerely,

William Tremml
Secretary-General
DartMUN XII



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January 18, 2017

Dear Delegates:

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Welcome to the twelfth annual Dartmouth Model United Nations Conference! It is my pleasure to serve as your Committee Director for the United Nations Human Rights Council. Over the course of this conference, we will critically analyze and attempt to formulate viable solutions for a few of the most urgent human rights violations of today. The United Nations Human Rights Council represents a global initiative to promote and protect human rights and ensure the empowerment of individuals across the world. As a delegate participating in this committee, you will be challenged to try to resolve two very distinct human rights violations occurring during this moment in time: the prevalence of sex trafficking in Eastern Europe and the rights of stateless people, specifically the Rohingya people of Myanmar and refugees fleeing from internal turmoil in Syria.

This upcoming conference, I will be acting as your Director of the United Nations Human Rights Council. As for my own background, I am from Rochester, New York and am a freshman at Dartmouth. I am a prospective history major with a concentration in Middle Eastern studies. On campus, in addition to Model UN, I am involved with Dartmouth's club ski team. I was heavily involved with Model UN in high school and am very excited to continue my passion for international relations in college!

Sophia Kinne is our Assistant Director for DartMUN XII. Sophia, also a freshman at Dartmouth, hails from Syracuse, New York, and intends to major relating to government or international relations. In addition to Model UN, Sophia is involved with Barbary Coast, Dartmouth's leading jazz ensemble, and is looking forward to DartMUN XII.

The following background guide is a culmination of efforts by myself and Sophia throughout the course of the past few months. It is not meant to be a complete and comprehensive guide to both topics; rather, it is meant as a starting point for your own research in order to fully understand the complexity of each respective contemporary issue. In order to be adequately prepared for DartMUN XII, we recommend that each delegate conducts further research in order to formulate his or her position through the position of the country they are representing. Please feel free to contact myself (Anne.Y.Pinkney.20@dartmouth.edu) or Sophia (Sophia.T.Kinne.20@dartmouth.edu) as questions arise.

Thank you in advance for your hard work in preparation for this conference. I hope your experience in the United Nations Human Rights Council will be an enriching and engaging academic environment, and am looking forward to meeting you all this spring!

Sincerely,

Anne Pinkney
Committee Director, UNHRC
DartMUN XII





Sex Trafficking in Eastern Europe

Introduction

History of Sex Trafficking within Eastern Europe

Located at the geographic crossroads of the East and West, Eastern Europe is the most impoverished region of Europe. The top ten poorest nations in the European Union are located in Eastern Europe¹, and between the years of 1987 and 1998, the number of people living below the poverty line rose from 1 million to 24 million². This area, and specifically the Western Balkans, has recently found itself in the midst of a human trafficking crisis.

According to statistics published by BBC, as of 2013 over 30,000 individuals were trafficked within and across the European Union³. An estimated 6,000 children between the ages of 12 and 16 are trafficked from Eastern Europe annually⁴. This is partially due to the economic fallout and weakened borders after the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, sex slavery in Eastern Europe was predominant even prior to the fall of the USSR. Prostitution was given tacit support by the government in the 20th century, and thus laid the foundation for the sex trafficking crisis we have

seen elevate in the late 20th and early 21st century. This crisis, which has only heightened in recent years, does not only affect the young girls and women who are victims of this blatant human rights violation; its effects stretch across the entire continent of Europe-and, in some cases, other areas of the globe-and infiltrate the communities of Eastern Europe.

The vulnerability of Eastern Europe to the global sex trade is rooted in its history as former territory of the Soviet Union. With the fall of the USSR and the subsequent formation of relatively weak borders and availability of inexpensive labor, Eastern Europe became a destination for multinational corporations eager to capitalize on the inability of these nations to implement strict regulations on commerce⁵. However, these manufacturers were not the only entities eager to capitalize on the instability of Eastern Europe. Sex tourism became commonplace within the former Soviet Union; the weakened borders allowed the transport of women from Eastern Europe to Western Europe to become much cheaper than trafficking women from Asia or Africa⁶.

Furthermore, the militarization of the area created an environment in which sex trafficking

¹ Carmichael, Cody. "Top Ten Poorest Countries in Europe-2017 Update." *Gazette Review*. N.p., 19 Feb. 2016. Web.

² Tyler, Richard. "Child Trafficking in Eastern Europe: A Trade in Human Misery." *World Socialist Web Site*. International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), 25 Oct. 2003. Web.

³ "Trafficking Harms 30,000 in EU - Most in Sex Trade." *BBC News*. BBC, 17 Oct. 2014. Web. <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29660126>>.

⁴ Tyler, Richard. "Child Trafficking in Eastern Europe: A Trade in Human

Misery." *World Socialist Web Site*. International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), 25 Oct. 2003. Web.

⁵ Kligman, G., and S. Limoncelli. "Trafficking Women after Socialism: To, Through, and From Eastern Europe." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 12.1 (2005): 118-40. Web.

⁶ Tyler, Richard. "Child Trafficking in Eastern Europe: A Trade in Human Misery." *World Socialist Web Site*. International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), 25 Oct. 2003. Web.



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could become feasible. In countries such as Bosnia and Kosovo, wars have promoted prostitution and sex trafficking by introducing a more prevalent presence of brothels. The Kosovo War, fought between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the rebel group known as the Kosovo Liberation Army, is a prime example of this phenomenon. During the Kosovo war, a system of “sex services” was already well-established by the time NATO intervened⁷. This followed a relatively well-known global pattern of prostitution flourishing at military bases, and only contributed to the prevalence of the sex trade in Eastern Europe. The presence of soldiers within the Balkans only exacerbated the demand for prostitution to occur.

Women became particularly vulnerable to sex trafficking after the collapse of the Soviet Union due to the destruction of infrastructure ensuring their job security. Under the Soviet economic system, women were required to remain in the work force unless they became pregnant⁸. After the fall of the Soviet Union, women became more susceptible to unemployment due to discrimination in the workplace. By the turn of the 21st century, over 80 percent of women in Eastern Europe were unemployed⁹. These newfound swaths of unemployed women made them increasingly

vulnerable to being deceived by traffickers who promise secure jobs away from the women’s homes. Oftentimes, the traffickers lured the women out of their villages or towns by promising financial security, economic opportunities, or a better life for the women, only to sell them into sex slavery and traffic them across Europe.

Women trafficked from Eastern Europe are primarily transported to Western Europe, with Germany and Italy as primary receivers. According to Europol, by the end of the 1990s, of the several thousand individuals trafficked into and within the European Union, 90 percent were from Central and Eastern European nations¹⁰. However, victims of sex trafficking within Eastern Europe have also been transported to the Middle East, Asia, and North America.

Sex trafficking within Eastern Europe, however, does not simply affect adult women. Rather, this crime disproportionately affects young girls from impoverished areas and, oftentimes, broken homes. In fact, one third of victims of sex trafficking in Romania are underage girls¹¹. The victims of this crisis are as young as 12, and have been reported as being trafficked from countries as far-flung as the Congo, Honduras, China, and Afghanistan. It is not unheard of for girls to

⁷ Kligman, G., and S. Limoncelli. "Trafficking Women after Socialism: To, Through, and From Eastern Europe." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 12.1 (2005): 118-40. Web.

⁸ Hughes, Donna M. *Supplying Women for the Sex Industry: Trafficking from the Russian Federation*. ResearchGate. University of Rhode Island, Jan. 2005. Web.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Kligman, G., and S. Limoncelli. "Trafficking Women after Socialism: To, Through, and From Eastern Europe." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 12.1 (2005): 118-40. Web.

¹¹ Bruce, Andrea. "Romania's Disappearing Girls: Sex Trafficking in Romania." *Al Jazeera America*. Al Jazeera America, 9 Aug. 2015. Web.



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disappear from rural villages, only to be trapped within the realm of sex trafficking. The girls are often trafficked on the streets of major cities within Eastern Europe, although they are also sent to Western European countries and sexually exploited. Girls are more likely to be targeted than boys because they are usually less educated and viewed as a burden to their families—thus rendering them more vulnerable to traffickers who attempt to appeal to the girls. In some cases, families persuade their own daughters to prostitute themselves as a way to secure another flow of income for the family. This act makes the girls all the more vulnerable to falling into the hands of traffickers.

Oftentimes, traffickers gain the girls' trust by pretending to be in love with them, only to force them to sell themselves. They prey on girls who come from unstable familial conditions, and rely on emotionally manipulating the girls. One of the techniques employed by traffickers is the “lover boy” technique, in which a trafficker pretends to fall in love with a girl, and begins showering her with gifts or an emotional connection. However, the “lover boy” soon begins the next portion of the charade, and pretends to encounter a financial setback, and convinces the girl to sell herself on the streets in order to manage for a while. By this point, the girl feels indebted to her trafficker, and

fears ridicule if she were to return to her home. Thus, she succumbs to the pressures of her alleged love interest, and allows herself to become prostituted by this “lover boy”¹². The exploitation the girls experience turns a profit—but the girls rarely see this money, which usually goes directly into traffickers' pockets.

The girls often have little—if any—governmental protection. Law enforcement has not adequately responded to the situation at hand. The police overlook the human trafficking crisis, claiming that they only are aware of prostitution occurring on the streets, and thus classifying trafficking as prostitution. Prostitution implies consent, whereas trafficking does not—and trafficking often preys on young girls. In Romania, for example, the Romanian parliament reduced the penalty for human trafficking from five to 15 years to three to 10 years¹³. In Bosnia, the police force is incredibly corrupt to the degree that they tacitly allow the trafficking of girls to occur¹⁴. Furthermore, it is often difficult to arrest and prosecute traffickers, as the exploitation occurs in elusive and inconspicuous locations that are unreachable by law enforcement. Locals often do not acknowledge that the crisis exists, and instead prefer to metaphorically “sweep it under the rug”. When the girls return home, they oftentimes face ostracism from their families, who see them as impure due to

¹² Bruce, Andrea. "Romania's Disappearing Girls: Sex Trafficking in Romania." *Al Jazeera America*. Al Jazeera America, 9 Aug. 2015. Web.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Kligman, G., and S. Limoncelli. "Trafficking Women after Socialism: To, Through, and From Eastern Europe." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 12.1 (2005): 118-40. Web.



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the abuse they have experienced at the hands of their traffickers. This is a crisis that not only affects underage girls in Eastern Europe, but expands to adversely affect other areas of Europe.

Current Legislation

The UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children¹⁵, which is also referred to as the Palermo Protocol, was ratified in all Eastern European countries with the exception of the Czech Republic. This Protocol clearly defined trafficking, which was designed to alleviate the ambiguity surrounding what constitutes human trafficking as opposed to prostitution.

Furthermore, the Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings continued the effects of the Palermo Protocol. The Council of Europe Convention strengthened governmental framework for acting to prevent human trafficking. It promoted acceptance of victims of human trafficking and international cooperation in order to combat sex trafficking within Eastern Europe.

However, the implementation of this agreement is proving difficult to enforce. Certain Eastern European states do not allocate funds to shelter and services for human trafficking victims provided by NGOs¹⁶. Romania and Hungary currently only provide the reflection and recovery

period established within the Council of Europe Convention for foreign victims, rather than their own citizens.

Human trafficking is a crime with very low risk, and high profits. Traffickers rely on the compliance and bribery of border officials, law enforcement, and other authority figures to continue their abuse without being caught. This corruption is especially difficult to overcome, as countries are rare to prosecute corrupt officials for compliance with sex traffickers.

The majority of governments within Eastern Europe have attempted to curb the prevalence of sex trafficking by instituting public awareness campaigns, hotlines for those afflicted, and anti-trafficking propaganda distributed near borders¹⁷.

Solutions to the Problem

Unfortunately, these governmental efforts do not decrease the demand for the sex trade within Europe. When identifying possible solutions for the prevalence of human trafficking within Eastern Europe, it is crucial to remember the elusive nature of this practice and call into question the methods that have already been implemented, and the ways in which we can improve them.

Requiring governments to have strict laws against sex trafficking infringes on the sovereignty of those nations. Politically, it does not seem feasible to promote legislation due to the

¹⁵ Jolluck, Katherine R. *Combating the Trafficking of Women in Eastern Europe*. Stanford University, June 2012. Web.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.



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infringement of sovereignty that would certainly occur, and the prevalence of corruption within and between Eastern European nations. It is important to analyze the effects that strict policies regarding the punishment of captured traffickers would have on Eastern Europe. Furthermore, thinking about how the United Nations can promote international and domestic cooperation regarding the capture and prosecution of these criminals is of the utmost importance.

One of the more pressing issues is providing an infrastructure or framework for a support system designed to help victims recover from the trauma they endured while being trafficked. Not only do these victims need support, they also need the stigma regarding sex trafficking victims to disappear. Increasing awareness within the populace and ensuring that the victims of this humanitarian crisis receive the community and emotional support they need is crucial.

Tackling the human rights violations that are currently occurring in Eastern Europe is a daunting task: not only is it an international-and, frankly, a continental, if not global-issue, it is multi-scalar. The effects of sex trafficking can be felt in small villages in Romania to the highest courts of law within these nations, and this crisis requires global attention.

Questions to consider:

1. Considering the complicated reception victims of sex trafficking receive upon returning home, and the lack of action and recognition of the crisis by local persons in power, how can the United Nations work to increase local awareness about the crisis?
2. How can the United Nations assist young girls returning from their traffickers in regards to adjusting to their former lives?
3. Keeping in mind the lack of cooperation by law enforcement, how can we promote awareness within the police forces of the affected nations?
4. Without infringing on national sovereignty, how can the United Nations work to encourage harsher ramifications for those involved with the sex trafficking trade?
5. What role can other European nations not directly affected by sex trafficking play within the sphere of Eastern Europe?
6. How can the United Nations empower individuals to take action against the entrenched systems of exploitation within Eastern Europe?



Rights of Stateless Peoples in the 21st Century

Introduction

According to the United Nations, the international legal definition of a stateless person says that, “in simple terms...a stateless person does not have a nationality of any country.” Such statelessness is a problem which affects approximately 10 million people worldwide.¹⁸ People can be born into statelessness, or they can become stateless as a result of war, crises, and government change. Stateless people have no nationality or government protecting them, so they have no legal protection of basic human rights or from oppression and discrimination. Stateless people often do not have the right to marry, get an education, or sufficient health care. Economic status often suffers. In situations of statelessness, people are often refused housing, or are unwelcome among groups of people that can claim a nationality¹⁹. This often results in violence and discrimination. Many scholars argue that genocide can be an extreme result of the ill-protection of the rights of stateless peoples. The Jews were not protected under German law as a result of policy established by the German government. Nuremberg Laws stripped Jews of their citizenship, and this paved the way to the mass-

murder that became the Holocaust of World War II. It is important that the world community recognizes the plight of stateless peoples, and develop solutions to both protect their rights, and prevent statelessness from happening to other groups and peoples.

Statelessness is the result of the difficult business of receiving nationality. In 27 countries, women are not allowed to pass on their nationality²⁰, and as a result, children being born into statelessness is a key issue. Other causes include the changing of borders or development of new laws, or the poor explanations of citizenship laws, resulting in confusion and unclear descriptions of who is a citizen and who is not²¹. In all cases, there are historical, political, social, and economic circumstances and factors that affect the arguments of both sides of the debate for nationality.

Significant examples of stateless peoples in the 21st century are the Rohingya people in Myanmar and Syrians in Europe and the Middle East. Although these situations have key circumstantial differences, they are fundamentally similar in the issues they present for the people.

¹⁸ “Ending Statelessness.” UNHCR. N.p., n.d. Web. 14 Dec. 2016

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.



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The Rohingya in Myanmar: History/Current Situation

The Rohingya are a Muslim minority who face persecution in majority Buddhist Myanmar in the Rakhine state²². Myanmar was a country under military rule for over 50 years, and has only recently began to transition to a democratic form of government. Today, the government is under the leadership of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who was elected in 2015. San Suu Kyi's election was followed by the lifting of U.S. sanctions on Myanmar, and has in general been viewed as a signal toward democratic progress and recovery for the nation.²³ These new and improved relations are viewed with controversy, as many claim that it is this democratic form of government which has not only allowed the persecution of the Rohingya people to persist, but was actually responsible for their persecution as well.²⁴ In 1982, The Rohingya people were stripped of their citizenship under the establishment of the Myanmar government²⁵. This government was the beginning of the overturning

of military rule, which has since progressed to the democratic system in place today, under the leadership of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. A recent Yale study concluded that the Myanmar government "worked with extremist Buddhist groups in 2012 to attack and drive Rohingya out of the country."²⁶ Again, this government was in place during the country's improving relations with the United States as it struggled towards democracy. Rohingya in the Rakhine state face violence, and are "denied freedom of movement, marriage, jobs and schooling."²⁷ The Myanmar government claims that there are refugee camps for Muslim minorities living in Myanmar and facing persecution by the Buddhist majority, but many consider the m to be more like concentration camps, with starvation, violence, and persecution happening.²⁸ Nicholas Kristoff of the *New York Times* described the situation in Myanmar by claiming the existence of "21st century concentration camps"²⁹. The claim made is that the Rohingya people are not a specific ethnic group, but rather Bengali people living in

²² "Stateless Rohingya." *Restless Beings: Voice the Voiceless. Restless Beings*, n.d. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.

²³ Aranow, Grace. "President Obama and Aung San Suu Kyi Celebrate Progress in Burma." *The White House*. The United States Government, 15 Sept. 2016. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.

²⁴ Kristof, Nicholas. "Myanmar's Peace Prize Winner and Crimes Against Humanity." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 09 Jan. 2016. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.

²⁵ "Stateless Rohingya." *Restless Beings: Voice the Voiceless. Restless Beings*, n.d. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.

²⁶ Leavenworth, Stuart. "Yale Study Accuses Myanmar of Genocide against Muslim Minority." *McClatchyDC*. N.p., 29 Oct. 2015. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.

²⁷ Carroll, Adam. "7 Things You Should Know About the Crisis in Burma." *The Islamic Monthly*. N.p., 7 Nov. 2015. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.

²⁸ Jason, Motlagh. "These Aren't Refugee Camps, They're Concentration Camps, and People Are Dying in Them." *Time*. Time, 17 June 2014. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.

²⁹ Kristof, Nicholas. "Myanmar's Peace Prize Winner and Crimes Against Humanity." *The New York Times*. The New York Times, 09 Jan. 2016. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.



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the country illegally³⁰. Since 2012, there has been international outrage at the plight of the Rohingya people within Myanmar. Incidents of violence inflicted by Buddhist supremacists continue to be reported. In 2013, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said the Myanmar government needed to take "necessary steps to address the legitimate grievances of minority communities, including the citizenship demands of the Muslim/Rohingya in Rakhine"³¹. The situation in Myanmar has resulted in thousands of refugees from Myanmar fleeing to Thailand, where there are over 106,000 refugees living in nine camps on the Thailand/Myanmar border³². This refugee crisis has brought about instances of human trafficking. This caused the Thai government to make an effort to arrest several smugglers, which in turn resulted in the "boatpeople crisis of the Andaman Sea," in which thousands of Rohingya refugees were stranded at sea because the smugglers feared arrest³³. Because the Rohingya people are not considered by the Myanmar government to be citizens of Myanmar, but rather, a group of people living illegally in the country, essentially taking up space and resources.

This attitude allows the Myanmar government to justify denying them rights as previously mentioned, like health insurance, jobs, education, and marrying privileges³⁴. The Myanmar government doesn't even want to use the term "Rohingya," which would be acknowledging the existence of this Muslim minority as an ethnic minority. In November 2015, five men were arrested on the charge of "fear or alarm to the public" because they printed the term "Rohingya" on a calendar, acknowledging the existence of the ethnic group.³⁵ Additionally, many Buddhists in the Rakhine state believe the situation has been "grossly mischaracterized" because the people referred to as Rohingya are believed not to be a single ethnic group, but rather a political group encompassing people of many ethnicities. Claims are also made that the history of the "Rohingya" refers to Muslim people who did in fact come from Bangladesh in the 9th century during the period of colonial rule.³⁶ This take on the issue calls to mind the importance of classifying and handling world crises as they relate to the people involved and the history associated with the issues. Blanket

³⁰ Carroll, Adam. "7 Things You Should Know About the Crisis in Burma." *The Islamic Monthly*. N.p., 7 Nov. 2015. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.

³¹ "UN Chief: Burma Should Address Citizenship Demands of Rohingya." *V.O.A.* N.p., 11 July 2013. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.

³² "Refugees in Thailand, February 2016." *ReliefWeb*. N.p., 21 Feb. 2016. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Carroll, Adam. "7 Things You Should Know About the Crisis in Burma." *The Islamic Monthly*. N.p., 7 Nov. 2015. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.

³⁵ Myot, Bone. "Five Myanmar Men Arrested, Charged For 'Rohingya Calendar'" *Radio Free Asia*. Trans. Khet Mar and Joshua Lipos. N.p., 25 Nov. 2015. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.

³⁶ Chia, Jasmine. "The Truth About Myanmar's Rohingya Issue." *The Diplomat*. The Diplomat, 05 Mar. 2016. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.



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statements and accusations cannot be made without thorough consideration and investigation, but it is also important to recognize that people are being denied citizenship and therefore rights, as well as being mistreated and violently persecuted.

Possible Solutions:

A big issue with the current situation in Myanmar is that there is not a lot of certainty on the situation because “Myanmar makes it difficult for aid groups and journalists to see the Rohingya, so that they are largely invisible,” according to Kristoff of the New York Times. If the Buddhists in the Rakhine state and the Myanmar government are going to make claims about the ethnic illegitimacy of the Rohingya and the lack of existence of violence, persecution, and concentration camps, then the country needs to be more open with the situation, so the world community can make assessments. Also, in supporting democratic actions of Myanmar, the United States should emphasize the importance of human rights and citizenship rights for all ethnicities, which would potentially encourage transparency of the situation in Rakhine.

Before further solutions can even be discussed regarding Myanmar and the treatment of Rohingya, the world community needs to establish whether the Rohingya exist as an ethnic minority,

and whether there is as much violence and persecution against them, whether they are a specific ethnicity or not. Just as of December, 2016, the Myanmar government put out a statement saying that their investigation of violence by Myanmar military, which was set up in response to international criticisms of the president and claims of violence towards the Rohingya, was untrue, and that the military said they have acted legally toward people in the Rakhine state³⁷. All of this is of course put into question by the fact that independent journalists are blocked from entering and reporting on Myanmar and the Rakhine state³⁸. The Myanmar government has further stated that they will write a book giving the true history of the Rohingya people in Myanmar, in order to clear up false claims of their ethnic legitimacy³⁹.

This issue is important because it is a current world crisis of statelessness that still has significant international debate on either side. There are important factors such as recognition of political groups, importance of democracy, support of current government institutions, and the consequence of challenging current institutions and established laws that each country would have to consider when addressing this humanitarian issue. For example, India and China are seeking to

³⁷ Lone, Wa, and Simon Lewis. "Myanmar Government 'following the Law' in Rakhine, Probe Panel Says." *Reuters*. Thomson Reuters, 14 Dec. 2016. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ "Ministry to Write Myanmar's True History without Rohingya | Dhaka Tribune." *Dhaka Tribune*. N.p., 14 Dec. 2016. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.



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improve economic relationships with Myanmar, as they are close neighbors⁴⁰. Any potential humanitarian related discourse and disagreement could prevent this from being effective. Not only is the way the UN chooses to address the humanitarian issue significant, but also the UN's response to how and whether Myanmar recognizes the Rohingya people as undergoing a humanitarian struggle.

Syria History/Current State:

The conflict in Syria began in 2011 with demonstrations against President Assad, who had himself ruled since 2000, and whose father before him ruled since 1971.⁴¹ Protests of the authoritarian government cloaked as democratic spurred violence from the government, which led to full on civil war as rebels against the government took up arms, and the government fought back. The government was accused of using chemical weapons against its people, and over 470,000 have died as a result of the conflict.⁴² The conflict has also resulted in hostility and conflict between the Sunni and Shia sects of Islam present in the country, and the conflict has been further escalated

by the presence of ISIS in Syria.⁴³ The Syrian Civil War has resulted in over 11 million people fleeing their homes⁴⁴ in an effort to escape the violence and persecution. As of 2015, 6.5 million people were displaced within the nation itself, "70% of the population is without access to adequate drinking water" and "one in three people are unable to meet their basic food needs"⁴⁵.

The millions people fleeing Syria has resulted in a severe refugee crisis and sparked conversation about humanitarian aid for refugees in Europe and around the world. Germany received the most applications for asylum in 2015, over 476,000, but Hungary received the most in proportion to its population. Responses to the refugee crisis in Europe have been mixed, with many countries feeling treated unfairly in the EU based on the number of refugees being taken in by the country, and claims that this number is disproportional to their population, and that this in turn is unfair. Several countries put up quotas for accepting refugees. For example, the UK has agreed to accept 20,000 refugees over the next five years, while Germany agreed to accept 18,000.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Kundu, Sampa. "How India Can Direct Its 'Act East' Policy Toward Myanmar." *The Diplomat*. The Diplomat, 02 Sept. 2016. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.

⁴¹ "Bashar Al-Assad." *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopedia Britannica, 5 Sept. 2013. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.

⁴² Boghani, Priyanka. "A Staggering New Death Toll for Syria's War — 470,000." *PBS. FRONTLINE*, 11 Feb. 2016. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.

⁴³ Rodgers, Lucy, David Gritten, James Offer, and Patrick Asare. "Syria: The Story of the Conflict." *BBC News*. N.p., 11 Mar. 2016. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.

⁴⁴ "The Syrian Refugee Crisis and Its Repercussions for the EU." *Syrian Refugees*. N.p., Sept. 2016. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.

⁴⁵ Rodgers, Lucy, David Gritten, James Offer, and Patrick Asare. "Syria: The Story of the Conflict." *BBC News*. N.p., 11 Mar. 2016. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.

⁴⁶ "Migrant Crisis: Migration to Europe Explained in Seven Charts." *BBC News*. N.p., 04 Mar. 2016. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.



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There was significant debate as to whether this number was too small, and if the UK should be accepting more refugees. Germany, which has a bigger population, has agreed to accept less than the UK, which could be an argument that the UK is doing more. Other factors such as resources of a country also have to be considered when weighing the country's response to the problem. These numbers are significant in showing European response to the refugee crisis, but more information needs to be evaluated to judge each country's response and subsequent impact on the crisis.

There has been additional conflict surrounding the refugee crisis as far as fear of accepting refugees. Citizens in Europe and the United States, but specifically the United States, are afraid that accepting Muslim refugees into the U.S. would result in terrorist attacks, based on the fact that the refugees come from countries where ISIS is prevalent, and also based on an ignorant fear of Muslims. The refugee crisis of Syrians is affecting the United States and Europe, as far as their position on welcoming in Syrian refugees or not.

A significant issue tied to the Syrian refugee crisis is that in addition to those who are fleeing their homeland of Syria needing protection and support from the international community, those

people are giving birth to children who do not have citizenship to any land. Often times citizenship is taken away once the people flee Syria, but additionally, Syrian refugee children are at an extreme risk of statelessness because they often do not have birth certificates, meaning they cannot prove their nationality or claim citizenship to a particular land, which would grant them rights, protection under the law, education, health care, etc. Without citizenship, they are also at an increased risk of exploitation, such as trafficking for commercial sex work, illegal adoption, or child labor.” The problem is that under Syrian law, citizenship can only be passed to children from their fathers. In many cases, children are left fatherless, and they cannot claim Syrian citizenship. This adds issue to the refugee crisis because they cannot claim protection based on a specific nationality.⁴⁷

Possible Solutions:

The biggest issue for Syrian refugees right now is asylum. Countries with the ability need to step up and accept the refugees fleeing war and persecution. It is important that countries develop policy and use resources available to them to help the people who need it. Often times lack of assistance from Western powers is used by ISIS to encourage those being exploited to join the cause. It

⁴⁷ Dunmore, Charlie. "Born in Exile, Syrian Children Face Threat of Statelessness." *UNHCR*. Ed. Leo R. Dobbs. N.p., 4 Nov. 2014. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.



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is important that these Western nations reach out to the people who are just searching for a place to live and really, basic human rights. Turkey is home to the largest number of Syrian refugees in the region, and about 60,000 Syrian babies have been born in Turkey. Turkey does not provide citizenship to these children, but it does give birth certificates and register births. This can potentially help them later in acquiring Syrian citizenship.⁴⁸ Other possible solutions include devising ways to protect the rights of people in countries where they don't necessarily have citizenship. The idea that human rights should be tied to nationality or a specific country is often the exact problem in achieving human rights for all. The conflict in Syria is directly related to the Syrian government trying to regain control, and rebel groups like ISIS also trying to gain power. At the same time, outside powers like Russia are in support of the Syrian government, while countries like the U.S. and Turkey oppose the regime. An attempt to end the civil war through international involvement would require a plan for how to proceed with a post-war government, if military action were to be successful. Because many countries have economic stake in Syria, economic sanctions would be difficult to establish and enforce.

Questions to consider:

1. How can the UN and the international community ensure that the research and statements being made by independent nations are a true reflection of what is happening?
2. Is it possible to force a nation to recognize a particular group of people as a specific ethnicity?
3. Does the UN and the international community have a responsibility to involve itself in the Syrian civil war beyond helping refugees?
4. Should asylum countries be obligated to protect the rights of refugees to the extent that they protect the rights of their citizens?
5. Are there any potential benefits to statelessness from the point of view of an oppressive government or established institution? What are the economic and political gains countries can make by not granting certain people citizenship?

⁴⁸ Grisgraber, Daryl. "Birth Registration in Turkey: Preventing Statelessness of Syrian Children." *Refugees International*. N.p., 10 Mar. 2015. Web. 14 Dec. 2016.