

General Assembly (GA1)

Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) Nile River Dispute

The construction and filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) on the Nile River have ignited a complex and contentious dispute between Egypt and Ethiopia. The GERD recently finished construction in 2020 since it began back in 2011 and has been celebrated as a huge success for Ethiopians as it is expected to bring electricity and improve the living standards of millions for people in the region. However, as the dam is nearing completion to be fully ready for use with filling the reservoir being the last step, Egypt is concerned on the impact of water flow from filling up the reservoir and how that could affect water scarcity in the Nile which they are so heavily dependent on especially for agriculture. However, Ethiopia argues that the dam will provide significant benefits without causing harm to countries downstream. The region is also very unstable and does not need nor can handle more conflict as there is a Civil war going on in Sudan currently and Ethiopia is coming off of their own civil war with the Tigray War and the rebels against the Ethiopian and Eritrean government. The issue is also connected at a global scale since the security of the area is crucial for economic stability since much of the world's trade travels through the region in the Suez canal making it a truly global issue. How can the UN help the two countries as well as the other riparian nations come to an agreement on a global issue in such a vital region without them going any further past the brink of war?

Helpful research links:

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-controversy-over-the-grand-ethiopian-renaissance-dam/>

<https://www.dw.com/en/ethiopias-gerd-dam-a-potential-boon-for-all-experts-say/a-65254058> <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/gerd-is-a-fait-accompli-so-its-time-to-get-real>

General Assembly (GA2)

Rights of the Kurdish People

Kurdistan is a geo-cultural region in West Asia that is located in parts of Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey. The Kurdish people face many challenges in just about every country they exist in. The most prominent example of this is in Turkey, where for years Kurds have dealt with constant harassment, unfair laws, and zero representation. Numerous Kurdish groups have risen in the past with hopes of an independent and united Kurdistan however as of right now this has only been a dream. In Iraq, there is a self-governing Kurdish power that is as close to independence as it has ever been, however current events such as widely recognized genocide, discrimination, war, and unjust laws have inhibited this oppressed people for far too long. What resources can the U.N. offer the Kurdish people? Will the U.N. be able to convince Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey to secede land for an independent Kurdistan?

Helpful Research Links:

<https://www.cfr.org/timeline/kurds-long-struggle-statelessness>

<https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-between-turkey-and-armed-kurdish-groups>

<https://www.iranintl.com/en/202309040225>

Global Security

(Committees 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D)

Private Military Companies

In recent years, the military landscape has noticed the proliferation of PMCs (Private Military Contractors). A PMC is a company that offers services either providing arms, soldiers, security, training, logistics, intelligence support, and other things for financial gain. They are essentially military contractors who are not government affiliated yet work with the government. PMCs exist in every continent other than Antarctica and play a vital role in 50+ countries with some being more discreet than others as they operate in the background. The primary issue with these PMCs is that they have no accountability. No accountability from the government and people. And these laws set by the government for official military operations are often bypassed as they are given special status by the governments who hire them. They have profit-motives that often do not benefit the people unlike governments who work in a social contract between government and people. PMCs have been accused of multiple war crimes such as alleged executions carried out by the Wagner Group in Mali. The role of the United Nations is to promote peace and security so how can the UN help governments control and keep these PMCs in check to make sure there is transparency and uphold ethical standards?

Helpful research links:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/31/world/africa/mali-wagner-civilian-killings.html>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/11/violations-mercenaries-and-private-military-and-security-companies-highlight> <https://gsdrc.org/document-library/the-power-to-construct-international-security-on-the-significance-of-private-military-companies/>

The Global Illicit Arms Trade

The illicit arms trade is a global network of illegal trade of guns and/or ammunition. The quantity or lethality of the guns being traded can vary from something as small as a pistol or handgun to fully automatic assault rifles, and even explosives. The illicit arms trade is a massive industry with its worth being estimated at at least \$112 billion in 2020. The illicit arms trade contributes to local and national terrorism. For example, much of the Haitian gun violence is fueled by American-manufactured guns that are exported illegally to many Latin American and Caribbean nations like Haiti. Other regions are plagued with gun violence that can be directly attributed to the illicit arms trade like the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Sub-saharan Africa which also negatively affects the economy and overall safety of living in those countries. The role of the United Nations is to promote peace and security so how can the UN help reduce and eventually eliminate the illicit arms trade?

Helpful research links:

<https://illicittrade.org/illegal-arms-trafficking>

<https://www.cfr.org/blog/stopping-illegal-gun-trafficking-through-south-florida>

<https://www.sipri.org/databases/financial-value-global-arms-trade#:~:text=For%20example%2C%20the%20estimate%20of,is%20likely%20to%20be%20higher.>

Cyber Terrorism

As society is becoming more and more dependent on technology, there has been a growing concern documented by the UN over the misuse of technology to commit, incite, recruit, fund, or plan terrorist acts. Terrorists, through the utilization of attacks such as man in the middle, ransomware, and phishing have created disruptions in critical infrastructure and huge data leaks. In this digital age, critical infrastructure like government services, healthcare systems, and transportation networks are all connected to the internet, making them a target for attackers. For example, health services in Ireland were disrupted for several weeks after a ransomware attack in 2021. Similarly, in July of 2023, the New Zealand Parliament, Parliamentary Counsel Office (PCO), and Legislation websites were all temporarily shut down after a DDOS attack by Russian hackers in retaliation for supporting Ukraine. To make things worse, there aren't enough people employed in the information security field, forcing experts to act as responders rather than putting in preventative methods. As a response, conversations around this problem have been initiated at the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG). However, countries such as the U.S. and Russia have not been able to agree on what OEWG's course of action should be. How can these opposing countries come to an agreement? How can the UN help grow the information security workforce? How can the UN prevent cyber-terrorism attacks from damaging critical infrastructure?

Helpful research links:

<https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/cybersecurity>

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/05/19/un-struggles-to-make-progress-on-securing-cyberspace-pub-84491>

<https://www.csis.org/programs/strategic-technologies-program/significant-cyber-incidents>

The New Space Race

As our ever-growing reliance on space increases, so does the fight for control over it. Over 70 nations now have established space programs. As we can see, a new space race has begun. An instance of this is with countries wanting to revisit the moon like India's recent Chandrayaan-3 moon landing which is the first landing on the moon's south pole—a side of the moon with water ice in craters. There is enormous potential for exploration and utilization through means of space mining, resource exploration like ice and water, and satellites; these include those used for early-warnings of nuclear launches and essential communication/positioning systems. Space's role in modern life cannot be overstated and especially in military warfare. Without collaboration or regulation of space, wars over resources and control over space may arise. The threat of certain countries taking advantage of launching particular weapons into space in order to gain a military advantage or to launch satellites for the sole purpose of spying for key military information is stronger than ever. How can the UN fulfill its role in maintaining peace and security by ensuring nations work together to guarantee the situation does not spiral out of control?

Helpful research links:

<https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/topics/new-space-race-astropolitics-power-21st-century>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/08/31/india-space-moon-russia-china-nasa-chandrayaan-3/>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/07/20/china-united-states-space-competition/>

Global Economics

(Committees 2A, 2B, 2C)

Inflation's Burden on the Global Economy

A major challenge facing the global economy is inflation, due in part to ongoing supply problems and rising demand as a result of the economy's resurgence in a post-Covid era. Product scarcity and corporate drive for profits go hand in hand with higher prices. In response to inflationary pressure, the American Federal Reserve intends to tighten its monetary policy. As a result, vulnerable countries are at risk of finding it more difficult to access the capital market. The European Central Bank would also hike up interest rates. On top of that, many small businesses are finding it difficult to increase their prices, meaning that their profit margins are decreasing significantly. Higher living costs are also leading to social unrest. In October 2021, 20 of 146 countries registered inflation rates above 10 percent, and in October 2022, 68 of 146 countries reported inflation above 10 percent. UNCTAD, however, claimed that politicians and central bankers in advanced nations were erring by evoking the aggressive inflation-squeezing measures employed in the 1970s and 1980s, which were unsuitable for the current global situation and harm developing nations. What measures can the UN recommend and help implement to combat inflationary pressures at the source without pushing poorer countries over the precipice?

Helpful Research Links:

<https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2023-05-10/column-these-are-the-companies-whose-thirst-for-profits-drove-inflation-higher>
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/research/publication/inflation-in-emerging-and-developing-economies>
<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/oct/03/un-accuses-richest-nations-of-imprudent-gamble-in-inflation-fight>

Affordable Housing

Housing is not being built fast enough and the housing that is being built is often not in the price range of the many people. This causes people to be evicted from their homes due to not being able to afford rent as well as no alternate housing being available. Housing is a basic human right. The World Economic Forum states "By 2025, 1.6 billion people are expected to be affected by the global housing shortage, according to the World Bank." In many countries, the cost of housing has grown much faster than people's incomes. Studies found in 200 cities globally, around 90% of the housing is found to be unaffordable for the majority of people to live in. How can the United Nations help to lower the cost of homes or provide alternative housing for people around the world?

Helpful Research Links:

<https://www.urbanet.info/the-global-housing-crisis/>
<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/06/how-to-fix-global-housing-crisis/>
<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2021/07/can-new-technology-solve-the-global-housing-crisis>

Generative Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence is based on the concept that human intelligence can be defined in a way that a machine can be programmed to think like a human, mimic their actions, and execute tasks. Much in the way automation eliminated

many manufacturing jobs, recent innovations such as Chat GPT have the potential to replace jobs in software development, media, market analysis, education, and even healthcare. According to a study done by Goldman Sachs, generative AI could substitute up to one-fourth of current work, and expose approximately 300 million full time jobs to automation. As with all technological advancements, generative AI also has the possibility of creating new jobs and boosting productivity. How can the United Nations regulate the use of AI to prevent mass unemployment while simultaneously helping countries to utilize AI to create new fields and boost the productivity of existing jobs?

Helpful Research Links:

https://www.key4biz.it/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Global-Economics-Analyst_-The-Potentially-Large-Effects-of-Artificial-Intelligence-on-Economic-Growth-Briggs_Kodnani.pdf

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2023/3/28/will-chatgpt-take-your-job-and-millions-of-others>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/18/world/un-security-council-ai.html>

Dedollarization

Currently, the U.S. dollar is used in 88% of international trade and 59.8% of global foreign exchange reserves. This makes the dollar the most widely used international currency, giving the U.S. immense power on the global economic stage. However, countries historically relying on the US dollar have begun to “dedollarize” their economies. Dedollarization is a complex economic phenomenon in which countries around the world have begun to increase efforts to reduce their reliance on the US dollar (USD) as the primary international currency. Russia and China, two main players on the international stage, have led efforts to transition away from the USD in international exchange by proposing a completely new currency, BRICS, to replace the USD. BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) is an alliance originally formed by the previous countries for political cooperation. Recently, BRICS has turned its attention to dedollarization efforts by proposing a radical new solution: creating a completely new currency (also named BRICS). Many countries are following suit for a variety of reasons. Dedollarization supports a country’s independence by making the nation less susceptible to US economic pressure and increasing financial stability. Although there is a global push for dedollarization, there are many challenges and negative effects that must be considered. First, reworking a nation’s financial system away from the USD will require updated trade negotiations with the US, in which the US may not be willing to give up its monopoly and countries will be left without financial aid. Significant international currency changes, such as BRICS, will require fundamental institutional and legal changes on an international scale, which typically requires immense efforts over decades. Lastly, some countries that have a typically unstable domestic currency that has been devalued in the past may want to continue relying on the dollar to maintain their economic stability. How can the U.N. assist in the process of dedollarization to create a more equitable global economy?

Helpful Research Links:

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/russia-and-china-have-been-teaming-up-to-reduce-reliance-on-the-dollar-heres-how-its-going/>

<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/de-dollarization-countries-seeking-alternatives-to-the-u-s-dollar/>

<https://www.jpmorgan.com/insights/global-research/currencies/de-dollarization>

Human Rights

(Committees 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D)

Social Media and Free Speech

In the digital age, about 4.9 billion people actively engage with social media, making these platforms one of the most influential tools for government and political entities to reach the general public. False news and inaccurate information are persistent online, creating detrimental effects. For example, false news circulating social media platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted vaccination rates, leading to thousands of lives being placed at risk without vaccination. Furthermore, social media has been shown to cause further political and social polarization through “filter bubble” systems. Social media algorithms are designed to push content based on a user’s previous interactions on that platform. Thus, a user will only receive content that agrees with their existing beliefs, effectively cutting off the user from different viewpoints. While it is possible to censor social media, opponents of censorship argue that it violates fundamental democratic laws and ideals. Many people are concerned that governmental agencies or corporations could use censorship to remove any content that criticizes those in power. The Chinese government is known for its strict regulation on international media sites and for censoring dissident media. Should social media be censored or is that a violation of freedom of speech? If social media were to be censored, who would decide? What can the UN do to ensure that social media is a space that encourages discourse, and provides accurate information to all?

Helpful Research Links:

<https://citizenlab.ca/2020/05/wechat-surveillance-explained/>

<https://thehill.com/opinion/technology/3814620-social-media-must-balance-right-of-free-speech-with-audience-right-to-know/>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/stories/2021/07/moderating-online-content-fighting-harm-or-silencing-dissent>

Arbitrary Detention

Arbitrary detention occurs when someone is arrested on illegal grounds, when the victim is not informed about the reason for their arrest, when the victim’s procedural rights are not respected, or when the victim is not brought before a judge within a reasonable time. International law that “no one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile”. In 1991, the UN established a working group on arbitrary detention. The group consists of five experts from all throughout the globe who have the mandate to investigate cases of deprivation of liberty imposed arbitrarily or inconsistently with the international standards set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Yet, arbitrary detention is still occurring in many countries, mainly due to prejudice against specific minority groups or in order to maintain government control, such as arbitrary raids of Romany settlements in Russia and the secret detainment of Chinese who have spoken out against the government. How can the UN do more to prevent the continued practice of arbitrary detention? Could the UN come to a compromise with countries that are still practicing it? What could individual countries contribute to help with this issue?

Helpful research links:

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/about-arbitrary-detention>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/wg-arbitrary-detention>

<https://www.refworld.org/topic,50ffbce582,50ffbce58e,,0,MRGI,,.html>

Child brides

Being a child bride means getting married before the age of 18, often through an arranged or forced marriage. These early marriages have a devastating effect on a girl's life, because it effectively ends her childhood. Child brides are deprived of basic rights, like health care, education, or bodily autonomy, because oftentimes these marriages have an unhealthy power dynamic where the man is significantly older. Child brides end their education early, and hence are disadvantaged when and if they enter the job force. Additionally, these marriages, which often lead to early pregnancies, can be very dangerous. When a woman becomes pregnant before a safe childbearing age, she risks permanent health problems and even death for her and the child. It is estimated that "About 40 million girls ages 15-19 are currently married or in a union worldwide. And each year, some 12 million more girls will marry before reaching age 18 – and of those, 4 million are under age 15". These numbers have only increased since the Covid 19 pandemic, where many issues surrounding women's health and safety got significantly worse. What can the UN do to stop child marriages? How can they make sure that women have access to equal education and health care if they are already child brides?

Helpful Research Links:

<https://www.savethechildren.org/us/charity-stories/child-marriage-a-violation-of-child-rights#:~:text=Child%20marriage%20is%20formal%20or,to%20violence%2C%20discrimination%20and%20abuse.>

<https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/>

<https://www.unicef.org/protection/child-marriage>

Police Brutality

Excessive force used by law enforcement has gained more and more attention with the widespread global use of social media. At times, law enforcement requires use of force against violent groups or individuals for the protection of officers and the populace as a whole. However, at times force is used when unnecessary which leads to people being injured, permanently disabled, or even killed. On top of this, in many countries law enforcement is militarized, with access to arsenals of deadly weapons. While the killing of George Floyd in the U.S. is perhaps the most notorious, there are instances of the police in the Philippines executing drug dealers, Hong Kong police brutalizing protestors, and Brazilian police firing into crowds of innocent people. Much of this occurs without any consequences for the law enforcement officers or departments. Can there be standardized systems of training and accountability? Is this level of structural change even possible? How can the U.N. work to create globalized police reform?

Helpful Research Links:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/police-brutality/>

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/08/un-experts-call-end-police-brutality-worldwide>

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/08/1097782>

Environment

(Committees 4A, 4B, 4C)

Food Industry's impact on the Climate Crisis

From the farms and factories, to the transportation, all the way to the packaging, food is a major contributor to global warming. Roughly 35% of all man-made greenhouse gas emissions are resultant from the food industry. The biggest contributor to this issue is the agricultural practices and land use required to produce food for the growing global population. Several countries have made efforts towards more sustainable food production as a part of the European Green Deal. However the goal of food production sustainability is becoming more difficult with the increasing demand for food globally. Some newly discovered advances in the world of agriculture and food production are being contested over their hefty price tags and massive amounts of energy consumption. How can the United Nations drastically improve the industry responsible for 35% of global man made greenhouse gasses, before it is too late?

Helpful research links:

<https://www.unep.org/explore-topics/sustainable-development-goals/why-do-sustainable-development-goals-matter/goal-13>

<https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/science/climate-issues/food#:~:text=Food%20needs%20to%20be%20grown,emissions%20is%20linked%20to%20food.>

<https://www.fao.org/food-agriculture-statistics/data-release/data-release-detail/en/c/1491961/#:~:text=The%20latest%20statistics%20revealed%20that,%2C%20maize%2C%20rice%20and%20wheat.>

The Effect of Mass Pesticide Usage on Bee Colonies

Pesticide usage worldwide increased by 1.5 million tons in the year 2020. Consequently, beekeepers have reported annual bee colony losses of up to 40% since the year 2006. Research shows that the use of many common pesticides, such as Carbaryl and Oxamyl, can wipe out entire bee colonies if used in a 4 mile radius of a bee hive. For countries with enormous agricultural industries, pesticide usage has become common as it increases crop yields and therefore drives economic growth. But with this widespread usage of harsh chemicals, comes negative effects on the environment due to the decrease in bee populations. Without bees a number of insect pollination requiring crops, such as coffee, tomatoes, apples, and cocoa, would become extinct. These changes would not only pose a threat to the environment, but to food security as well. Around two thirds of the crops that the world relies on for eating are pollinated by bees. How can the UN help countries maintain crop yields, while also supporting pollinators?

Helpful Research Links:

<https://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/1194910/icode/>

<https://www.britannica.com/story/what-would-happen-if-all-the-bees-died#:~:text=Without%20bees%2C%20they%20would%20set,natural%20systems%20and%20food%20webs.>

https://ipm.ucanr.edu/mitigation/protect_bees.html#:~:text=Ensure%20that%20the%20applicator%20turns,after%20an%20application%20is%20made.

Deep Sea Drilling/Mining

The deep ocean floor, below 200 meters, serves as Earth's largest habitat for life (UN). As well, it's one of the hardest locations to access and the home of increasingly important natural metals to many of the world's nations. The promise of abundant natural resources below the ocean's surface has been long known. However advancements in technology and renewable energy solutions requiring large batteries have resulted in further interest from many nations into deep sea drilling/mining. Countries including China, Britain, South Korea, and 11 others have been granted exploration contracts by the UN's International Seabed Authority. Contrarily, a growing list of opposing countries now include Ireland and Sweden. Additionally, massive companies such as BMW and Volvo have vowed not to use minerals resulting from deep sea drilling/mining operations in their electric vehicles (Guardian). These nations argue that the largely unknown environmental effects brought on by deep sea drilling/mining will be detrimental to ocean ecosystems and even to the food supply of several developing nations. Deep sea drilling/mining may cause compaction to the sea floor, destruction to natural landforms and the life they host, and sediment plumes that disrupt the ocean wildlife, among other possible environmental consequences. This issue has become highly contested, the UN recently extended its pause on industrial scale deep sea drilling/mining until 2024 while at the Jamaica Conference in July. With this time the UN must decide on the parameters and protections required if the pause is to be lifted. Is deep sea drilling/mining the cure for the climate crisis with its uses in new renewable products? Or could it cause irrevocable effects to marine life and further the devastating effects of climate change?

Helpful Research Links:

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/apr/29/deep-sea-gold-rush-rare-metals-environmental-harm>

<https://www.npr.org/2021/09/03/1031434711/your-next-car-may-be-built-with-ocean-rocks-scientists-cant-agree-if-thats-good>

<https://www.iucn.org/resources/issues-brief/deep-sea-mining>

Concrete Production

Concrete is the second most used material on the planet, after water. To put this into context, in a year, enough concrete is produced to cover the entire surface of England. The cement industry emits 2.8bn tons of carbon dioxide, and because it is used all over the world, it continues to be a major contributor to climate change. Not only does the process of making concrete release copious amounts of carbon dioxide, harshly affecting the environment, but the material can be dangerous to the human respiratory system and add to air pollution. According to *The Guardian*, "The dust from wind-blown stocks and mixers contributes as much as 10% of the coarse particulate matter that chokes Delhi, where researchers found in 2015 that the air pollution index at all of the 19 biggest construction sites exceeded safe levels by at least three times." The environmental effects don't stop here. Sand is in high demand as more and more concrete is used, leading to the destruction of rivers and beaches which are mined by groups affiliated with organized crime and violent behavior. In order to eliminate the effects of concrete, the United Nations must come together to solve this urgent issue. What solution must be developed that has a minimal impact on the environment, and at the same time does not demand a higher cost to use? What laws can be introduced to monitor the production of concrete across the world?

Helpful Research Links:

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2019/feb/25/concrete-the-most-destructive-material-on-earth>

<https://www.greenspec.co.uk/building-design/environmental-impacts-of-concrete/>

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/can-concrete-a-major-co2-emitter-be-made-greener>

Health and Human Services

(Committee 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D)

Opioid Addiction

Opioids, such as heroin, morphine, and fentanyl, are highly addictive drugs used to relieve persistent and/or severe pain. In recent years, despite efforts by countries around the world to crack down on the illegal sale and overprescription of these drugs, overdose rates from these drugs are still on the rise. In both developed and developing countries, opioids have become a lethal dependence as the number of opioids being prescribed continues to grow. In particular, “Israel has a serious opioid problem”, according to a recent report published by the Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel. Several peer-reviewed studies indicate that in 2020, Israel led the world per capita in prescriptions for potent and addictive drugs, warning of an oncoming opioid epidemic. The epidemic is also strongly affecting the U.S. and Canada, with Australia and Europe starting to see a rising number of opioids being consumed and overdose deaths. How can the UN reduce these increasing opioid overdose rates? How can the UN prevent their overprescription? What type of infrastructure can the UN implement to prevent the worsening of this epidemic?

Helpful research links:

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/opioid-overdose>

<https://www.oecd.org/health/opioids.htm#:~:text=This%20has%20created%20the%20so,opioids%20consumption%20and%20overdose%20deaths.>

<https://syntheticdrugs.unodc.org/syntheticdrugs/en/about.html>

Food Security and Dependency in Times of Crisis

The conflict in Ukraine and Russia highlighted the global dependency on both Russian and Ukrainian grain. With the conflict threatening both countries' ability to grow, harvest, and ship their grain, millions of people were under the threat of starvation. Specifically countries in eastern Africa. Fortunately, the United Nations was able to negotiate the Black Sea Grain Initiative to ensure the export of grain and subsequently saved the lives of millions. While the Black Sea Grain Initiative was successful, there is no guarantee it will secure grain exports through the duration of the war. There is a clear need to develop the agricultural infrastructure of the countries reliant on Ukrainian and Russian grain to help create food security and prevent their reliance on other countries. How can the United Nations help countries in the global south create agricultural programs that will create long-lasting food security for its people?

Helpful Research Links:

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1302415/wheat-import-dependence-on-russia-and-ukraine-by-country/>

<https://www.un.org/en/black-sea-grain-initiative/vessel-movements>

<https://www.reuters.com/markets/europe/un-efforts-save-black-sea-grain-deal-continue-coming-days-2023-05-15/>

Earthquake proofing

In the last 10 years there have been over 18 earthquakes, level 8 and higher, across the globe. The result of these natural disasters: 20,000 casualties a year on average. However, the fallout after one of these events spans farther than just public safety. Nations that have experienced a catastrophic earthquake are left with billions of dollars in damage. Once

functioning cities turn into wastelands of debris and rubble. As seen in February of 2023, the series of earthquakes that had devastating effects in Türkiye and Syria have caused almost 15 billion dollars in damage. In September of 2023 an earthquake in Morocco led to the deaths of over 1,000 people with the final toll unknown. Even with major advancements in technology, scientists are not able to predict when earthquakes will occur. However, by studying fault lines researchers are able to find dangerous zones that are likely to experience earthquakes. Countries such as Japan, have led the way in earthquake preparedness infrastructure. With the use of specific building practices and materials, it is now possible to create buildings that are far less likely to be destroyed in the event of an earthquake. Experts in Earthquake Engineering recommend the implementation of earthquake proof infrastructure into places at risk of high level earthquakes. However, many countries are hesitant to spend billions of dollars on the construction of these buildings. What kind of steps can these countries take to create buildings and cities that are safer from earthquakes? How can the U.N. help countries research, develop, and implement earthquake proofing strategies?

Helpful Research Links:

<https://www.nbcnews.com/science/science-news/worldwide-surge-great-earthquakes-seen-past-10-years-n233661#:~:text=%E2%80%9CIf%20we%20look%20at%20all,or%20so%2C%22%20he%20said.>

<https://news.un.org/en/search/earthquakes>

<https://apnews.com/article/morocco-earthquake-marrakesh-7f4a503009dede0dec0208c08d6b100b>

Lead Poisoning

Lead is a naturally occurring toxic metal found in the Earth's crust that severely impacts the health of young children, who are especially vulnerable. The metal's particles are released and can be inhaled during smelting, recycling, or the stripping of leaded paint. Additionally, water coming from lead pipes and food from lead-soldered containers get contaminated with lead. With children, the lead can spread to their nervous system and brain, causing comas, convulsions, and even death, and even those who survive may be left with permanent intellectual disability and behavioral disorders. This problem is especially prevalent in developing countries, especially in Egypt, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Senegal, as children who are undernourished (have a lack of iron and/or calcium) will absorb more lead than those who are not. Though the World Health Organization has successfully worked to phase out leaded gasoline in most countries, lead paint, lead pipes, informal lead-acid battery recycling, and other sources that can expose children to lead are still being used in many countries. How can the UN help phase out these sources of exposure that are still prominent in many developing countries? How can the UN help provide developing countries with the resources to help the children who have been exposed to lead?

Helpful Research Links:

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/lead-poisoning-and-health>

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(20\)30278-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(20)30278-3/fulltext)

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/alexkonrad/2023/09/07/ai-research-lab-imbue-nabs-200-million-for-speculative-bet-to-build-ai-agents/?sh=113d500d2b1e>

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation, or FGM, is the procedure in which most or all parts of female genitalia are removed, or any

other injury to organs. Most of this practice is considered ritualistic, and procedures can differ by ethnic group. This process is most commonly reported in Africa and the Middle East, and a report from UNICEF in 2016 estimated that over 200 million women from Indonesia, Yemen, Iraq, and 27 African countries were subject to FGM. The practice is typically carried out by women, and is usually done at birth. Female Genital Mutilation harms and humiliates women with no regard for their future cultural or religious values. The question is whether or not it is ethical for adults to decide what is the best course of action for families that want to go through with it for their infant daughters. Female Genital Mutilation can lead to a multitude of health problems such as haemorrhagic shock, neurogenic shock, and infection, all of which can lead to death. Medicalisation of FGM has been denounced by the World Health Organization. How can the United Nations protect women in these regions while still respecting cultural traditions?

Helpful Research Links:

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation>

<https://www.unicef.org/stories/what-you-need-know-about-female-genital-mutilation>

<https://www.endfgm.eu/female-genital-mutilation/what-is-fgm/>

Access to Reproductive Rights

Access to abortion on a global scale is broken down into five groups, depending on the decision of the country: Prohibited; To save the person's life; To preserve health; On social or economic grounds; On request. The disparity in abortion laws between countries is immense because of different religious or social beliefs, as well. As countries all over the world have discussed abortion and other reproductive services, the survival rate for mothers has increased; as well as the safety of abortion access. According to the World Health Organization between 5-13% of maternal deaths are a result of unsafe abortions. Despite this, restrictions on abortion are global. For example, the United States Supreme Court struck down *Roe v. Wade* in June 2022, which promised the constitutional right to abortion. Now, in the United States, the rights and limitations are determined by the individual states. In most industrialized countries, abortions are legal, while another subset of countries have layers that determine if an abortion should be allowed. Meanwhile, there are a few that have banned abortion outright. In addition to threatening a woman's health, forced birth and prohibited abortion access lead to safety complications for women that try to terminate their own pregnancies, as well as long term poor mental health. Also, the cycle of poverty that women are forced into is increased by families not being able to cover the costs of a child and putting it into various foster care systems. How can the UN work to increase reproductive rights around the globe and provide for the safety and well being of all women?

Helpful Research Links:

<https://reproductiverights.org/maps/worlds-abortion-laws/>

<https://www.cfr.org/article/abortion-law-global-comparisons>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5473035/>

Women in Human Trafficking

While human trafficking takes on many forms and victims, women and girls take up the majority of all human trafficking victims worldwide, which includes sex trafficking victims and victims in other industries. Human trafficking is more common in areas that have less protection over labor laws concerning women and discriminatory practices. This way, traffickers promise income in place of professional opportunities in order to gain the trust of young women. Human trafficking also follows patterns in different areas of the world. While Africa has the world's highest rate of

forced marriage, the Asia-Pacific region accounts for two-thirds of forced labor worldwide. Currently, Women are most commonly trafficked to Libya, Lebanon, Italy, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Belgium, and the United States. What can the UN do to increase protection of women and young girls from harmful exploitative practices?

Helpful Research Links:

<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/global-report-on-trafficking-in-persons.html>

<https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/global-human-trafficking/>

<https://catwinternational.org/>

Gender Pay Gap Recovery

Globally, for every dollar that men earn, women earn 77 cents. Currently, the rate estimates that it will take 257 years to close the gender pay gap, especially for women of color and those in marginalized groups. This was highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, as income security and stability in underrepresented sectors of the world was threatened, and women that have children were most likely to be unemployed. In the United States, mothers aged 25 to 44 are less likely to be employed than their childless counterparts around the same age. This is because women with children tend to work fewer hours in a week. On the other hand, fathers are more likely to be employed to help support a family, so the pay gap increases by both increased hours and increased pay for fathers. According to the 2022 Global Gender Pay Gap Report, the global gender gap for estimated earned income was 49%, while it was 35% for wage income. Currently, the countries with the highest wage gaps are South Korea, Israel, Latvia, Japan, Cyprus, Estonia, the United States, Canada, Finland, and France. What can the UN do to help close the global gender wage gaps?

Helpful Research Links:

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/09/1126901>

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw61/equal-pay>

<https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/en/data-insights/the-gender-pay-gap-continues-to-close-but-slowly>

Security Council

NATO expansion

Since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, Ukraine has been vocal about its willingness to join NATO. In February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine, with Russian President Vladimir Putin citing this potential NATO expansion to a country that borders Russia, as an existential threat to his country. Since Russia's invasion, NATO has approved both

Finland and Sweden as new members of the alliance. On July 11, 2023, NATO members held a summit in Lithuania and Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky requested a “clear and credible post-war pathway into NATO” for Ukraine, citing the formal invitation of Sweden and Finland as justification. Russia now shares a border with a NATO country (Finland), and Ukraine’s addition seems to be an ever increasing possibility. Throughout this process, China, India, and North Korea have continued economic relations with Russia that has allowed the war with Ukraine to continue. The actions of China have further increased tensions with the U.S. and other NATO countries. Should NATO be able to keep expanding? How could the UN lessen the tensions between NATO and Russia? The Security Council must find a way to accommodate all nations for a peaceful resolution.

Helpful Research Links:

<https://apnews.com/article/nato-turkey-sweden-erdogan-90c8dc9eca976cabebeaa5bfee4d1904>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-66160319>

<https://www.vox.com/22900113/nato-ukraine-russia-crisis-clinton-expansion>

Sudan Conflict

In Sudan, a civil war has erupted between the two most prominent generals and their loyalist forces. With its position on the Red Sea, Sudan has the potential to have influence on a multitude of economic and military factors. Because of this, many countries have begun to involve themselves in the conflict. The United Arab Emirates supports the Rapid Support Forces, allegedly taking interest in order to expand and exert more power in the African Horn area. Egypt supports the Sudanese military, as it sees a victory here as a threat to Ethiopia, another potential investor in the conflict. Additionally, the Russian mercenary organization The Wagner Group has an incredible stake in Sudan, and will most likely work to tip the scales in favor of the RSF. To compound the geopolitical issues, thousands of civilians have died and over one million refugees have fled to surrounding countries. What can the UN do to help the civilians and refugees and what can the UN do to bring the war to an end?

Helpful Research Links:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/apr/16/sudan-conflict-why-is-there-fighting-and-what-is-at-stake-in-the-region>

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/08/16/africa/sudan-one-million-flee-un-intl/index.html>

<https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/90382>

Tensions in the Arctic

As the price of oil fluctuates, countries are scrambling to find an alternative source of oil to power their countries. In recent times, many global superpowers including Russia, China, and the US have directed their attention up North to the Arctic Circle. Experts estimate that about 160 million barrels of oil, or 30% of the world’s natural gas is stored in the Arctic. Due to increased global warming and melting permafrost in the Arctic, extracting the oil has become a feasible opportunity that many countries are seeking to take advantage of. Due to the arctic circle’s geopolitical position, countries including Russia, China, and the US have sought further militaristic gain. Since the arctic is

connected to Canada, the United States, Russia, and Norwegian countries, control over this region would grant immense power over monitoring trade and movement of militaristic arms. Due to this, tensions in the Arctic are rising as countries continue to build military bases, oil extraction plants, and develop more established trade routes. How can the U.N. prevent further tensions and potential conflict?

Helpful research links:

<https://www.arcticwwf.org/threats/oil-and-gas/>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-61222653>

<https://www.arcticwwf.org/newsroom/features/arctic-connected-the-arctics-indigenous-communities-under-threat/>

Saudi Arabia and the Yemeni Civil War

On 26 March 2015, Saudi Arabia launched an intervention in the Yemeni Civil War in response to calls from the president of Yemen Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi for military support after he was ousted by the Houthi movement. Since then, thousands of civilians have lost their lives or their properties and an estimated 4.3 million people have fled their homes. An estimated 20.1 million people lack access to basic healthcare. Further, The Yemeni economy is also facing extraordinary fiscal challenges. Yemen has lost 90 billion USD in economic output and more than 600,000 people have lost their jobs. In addition, Saudi Arabia's weapons, supplied by countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States, were used fighting in war-torn Yemen. In response to this long conflict, each month, the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) distributes 100,000 metric tons of food commodities at more than 5,000 points, reaching more than 8 million Yemenis. Accounts from various sources report that Geneva Accords are being violated in the war. What could the UN do to solve this problem? As the security council, is there room for compromise between Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and its allies? If so, what kind of government would the UN institute in Yemen? Would the UN finally be able to achieve peace in Yemen?

Helpful Research Links:

<https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/yemen-crisis>

<https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/war-yemen>

<https://www.icrc.org/en/war-yemen>

International Court of Justice

Reparations for Slavery, Ransoms to Ex-Enslavers

Applicant Nation: Haiti

Respondent Nation: France

In the case of *Haiti vs France*, Haiti sues France, holding them accountable for their direct involvement in the transatlantic slave trade and seeking reparations for the immense suffering inflicted upon the Haitian people, whose impacts are still economically and socially relevant today.

France, a major player in the Atlantic slave trade, engaged in the buying, selling, and transportation of enslaved Africans to Haiti, subjecting them to inhumane conditions and labor exploitation. These exploitations directly contributed to the growth of France's economy and the financing of their empire, while Haiti suffered under the weight of systematic oppression and impoverishment. In 1791, enslaved Haitian accomplished the Herculean task of freeing themselves and founding Haiti, formerly known as Saint-Domingue. However, France then imposed crippling economic sanctions and exorbitant reparations demands, hindering the country's progress and perpetuating a cycle of poverty and underdevelopment. For generations, Haitian people repaid their wealthy French enslavers, and their descendants. If they could not pay (which many could not), they were forced to borrow and pay interest, known as the Double Debt.

The decision in the case has the potential to establish a precedent by acknowledging the legal and moral responsibility of nations for their historical involvement in the slave trade. Haiti argues that a favorable ruling for them could signal a commitment to rectifying historical wrongs and provide the necessary resources to address the ongoing socioeconomic disparities faced by the nation. Haiti argues that not only should France pay back the total amount of this ransom, adjusted for inflation (\$21 billion), but an additional amount that encompasses the long-term effects of the poverty and suffering France inflicted. France acknowledges a moral debt to Haiti, not a fiscal one. First, France maintains that payments from former slaves went to individual families, not the French government. Therefore, this is not a debt between countries. In addition to denying the high amount of the sanctions Haiti claims, France argues this would set an unrealistic precedent for other reparations for the slave trade. If other European nations have not repaid for the suffering inflicted, why should they? And, why should Haiti receive reparations when others affected have not? Even if we can set this precedent, how much? Is it fair to adjust for inflation? Another consideration is rampant corruption within the Haitian government: jurors should decide if and how this money be transferred and utilized in Haiti.

Helpful Research Links:

<https://slaveryandremembrance.org/articles/article/?id=A0111>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/22/insider/investigating-haitis-double-debt.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/20/world/americas/haiti-history-colonized-france.html>

Movement of the US Embassy to Jerusalem

Applicant Nation: Palestine

Respondent Nation: United States

This case concerns the relocation of the U.S. Israeli embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Palestine argues that the move violates international law and exacerbates the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by disregarding the status of Jerusalem as a disputed territory. They contend that the relocation undermines the potential for a two-state solution and compromises their aspirations for an independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital. On the other hand, the United States argues that it has the sovereign right to determine the location of its embassy and that the move is a recognition

of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. They assert that it does not prejudice the final status negotiations between the parties and that it aligns with their long-standing policy position.

In evaluating this case, juror states should consider the following factors: First, examine the relevant international law, including but not limited to the United Nations resolutions, the Oslo Accords, and the Geneva Conventions, to determine whether the relocation of the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem violates any legally binding agreements or principles. Second, carefully assess the impact of the embassy move on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, taking into account the potential consequences for the peace process, the rights of the Palestinian people, and the prospects for a two-state solution. Consider whether the relocation hinders or advances the goal of a just and lasting resolution to the conflict. Another consideration is the right of Palestine to bring this case, as the US and many UN member states do not officially recognise Palestine. Finally, weigh the arguments of both parties and evaluate the extent to which the relocation of the embassy affects the status of Jerusalem and the legitimate aspirations of both Israel and Palestine. Balance the rights of each stakeholder while considering the principles of international law, fairness, and the promotion of peace and stability in the region.

Helpful Research Links:

<https://www.un.org/unispal/document/relocation-of-us-embassy-to-jerusalem-palestine-vs-us-icj-order/>

<https://theintercept.com/2022/12/15/us-embassy-israel-biden-jerusalem/>

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-moving-the-u-s-embassy-to-jerusalem-would-be-dangerous-and-unwise/>

Transboundary Air Pollution

Applicant Nation: Malaysia

Respondent Nation: Indonesia

This case concerns years of transboundary air pollution caused by forest fires in Indonesia. Malaysia alleges that the recurrent haze resulting from the fires has severe environmental, health, and economic impacts on its population. They argue that Indonesia's failure to adequately prevent and address the forest fires violates its obligations under international environmental agreements. On the other hand, Indonesia maintains that it has taken measures to combat the forest fires, but they argue that the situation is complex and exacerbated by factors beyond their control, such as climate conditions and the actions of local actors. They emphasize their commitment to addressing the issue and seek a balanced approach that takes into account the interests of both countries.

In evaluating this case, the jury should consider the following factors: First, examine the evidence regarding the extent of transboundary air pollution and its impacts on Malaysia. Assess the scientific data, expert testimony, and reports on the severity of the pollution and its effects on public health, the environment, and the economy. Second, evaluate whether Indonesia has fulfilled its obligations under relevant international agreements and environmental norms. Consider the measures taken by Indonesia to prevent and address the forest fires, including efforts to mitigate the underlying causes and cooperation with Malaysia. Additionally, assess the influence of external factors, such as climate conditions and the actions of non-state actors, on the forest fires and the feasibility of Indonesia's response. Finally, weigh the arguments of both parties and determine whether Indonesia's actions and efforts are reasonable and sufficient, taking into account the principles of international law, fairness, and the duty to protect the environment and public health.

Helpful Research Links:

<https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2019/09/521921/analysts-pour-cold-water-proposal-sue-indonesia-icj>

<https://www.rfa.org/english/news/environment/haze-crisis-06232023021517.html>

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/09/11/asia/malaysia-singapore-pollution-intl-hnk/index.html>

Danube River Dam Project

Applicant Nation: Hungary

Respondent Nation: Slovakia

The Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Project (pronounced gob-CHET-ko-vo NAHJ-mo-rosh), a landmark dispute between Hungary and Slovakia, stands as a testament to the complex nature of transboundary water management and environmental conservation. This dispute revolves around the construction and operation of a joint hydroelectric dam system on the Danube River, initially conceived as a cooperative effort between the two nations to harness the river's energy potential and enhance navigation in the region.

Hungary's stance in this dispute is rooted in the belief that the original Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Project posed grave ecological threats to the environment and the livelihoods of communities along the Danube. They argue that the project, as initially conceived, violated international environmental principles and had the potential to cause irreversible harm to the ecosystem. On the other hand, Slovakia maintains that Hungary's unilateral withdrawal from the project was unjustified and that it caused economic and environmental damage to their country. Slovakia asserts that the original project could have been adapted to address environmental concerns, and Hungary's withdrawal was a breach of their bilateral agreement.

As they delve into this complex case, jurors are urged to consider not only the legal aspects but also the broader implications for international environmental law and cooperative resource management. The Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Project dispute raises fundamental questions about the balance between development and conservation, as well as the obligations of nations in addressing shared environmental challenges.

Helpful Research Links:

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/171-solving-the-gabcikovo-nagymaros-dam-conflict>

<https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1497&context=elr>

https://wwf.panda.org/wwf_news/?364755/slovak-dam-supreme-court-decision