

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL



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I. Letter from the chair

Dear delegates,

It is with great excitement and honor that we welcome you to ASMUN VIII. It is a pleasure for me to be able to preside over this committee alongside Luciana Badel from Marymount School. The preparation leading to this event has been filled with adventures and new experiences for everyone, but above all it has taught us to love the things we are passionate about. We know that this is a challenging experience for everyone, but we hope that you learn to love and enjoy it as much as we have.

MUN is more than just resolutions and debate, it is a platform where ideas, creativity and innovation are praised. The challenges we face in the real-world are reflected in the committee, and the best solutions arise from those that think outside the box. From those that are not afraid to accept challenges, to propose new strategies, and to challenge what is viewed as “traditional” perspectives.

This is why the biggest tip we can give you is to get out of your comfort zone. Accept points of information, talk with your head held high, reflect confidence, but most importantly, enjoy this adventure. Don't be afraid to make mistakes, we all have made mistakes at one point or another. Even those that seem the most experienced delegates have still a lot to learn.

Just as your job is to investigate and prepare yourselves for the debate, our job is to help you along every step of the way, so please don't hesitate to ask or contact us via email or Whatsapp if you have any questions or doubts, as we will gladly answer them.

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II. About the United Nations Security Council

2.1. What is it, and how does it work?

The Security Council is one of the six principal organs established under the UN charter, with its main responsibilities being maintaining international peace and security, addressing international threats, imposing sanctions and authorizing the use of force, including the deployment of peacekeeping missions. As the Security Council is the only United Nations body that can create legally-binding decisions for all member states, it holds a unique and important mandate to set norms and govern state actions. Traditionally, the Security Council discusses issues related to peacekeeping, security, and conflicts, however, with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Security Council has increasingly focused on the intersection between peace, security and sustainability.

The Security Council consists of five permanent members—The United States, The United Kingdom, China, Russia and France—and ten elected members, which have a two year term. The members meet regularly to assess threats that may disturb international security, including natural disasters, civil wars, arms proliferation, and terrorism. It aims to resolve these conflicts, avoiding the use of arms, under Chapter VI of the UN Charter, which authorizes the Security Council to investigate any dispute or situation which may lead to international conflicts. Additionally, Chapter VI of the UN Charter allows the Security Council to call on parties or countries to seek solutions via peaceful methods, such as negotiations.

To take action, the Security Council holds meetings where member states discuss and negotiate resolutions. Any state, even if it is not a member of the UN, may bring a conflict to

which it is a party to the attention of the Security Council, in hopes of finding a peaceful resolution. Each member has one vote, and a resolution requires at least nine affirmative votes, including the concurring votes of all five permanent members, to pass. However, a veto from any of the permanent members can prevent a resolution from being adopted.

The Security Council's work is guided by the UN Charter, and its decisions have significant implications for international peace and security.

2.2. History

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) was established on June 26, 1945, following the end of World War II and the creation of the United Nations (UN).

Throughout its history, the Security Council has played a crucial role in addressing various global conflicts and crises. It has the power to impose sanctions, authorize military interventions, and establish peacekeeping missions.

During the Cold War era, the Security Council was often deadlocked due to the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. However, the absence of the Soviet veto vote successfully allowed the United States to militarily support South Korea in the Korean war. Moreover, the Security Council has managed to address other historical conflicts such as the Suez Crisis. Nevertheless, it has received severe backlash for its intervention, or lack thereof, in the Rwandan Genocide of 1994, leading many to question the effectiveness of the Security Council as a peacekeeping and deliberative body.

In recent times, the Security Council has been involved in addressing conflicts in regions like the Middle East, Africa, and Eastern Europe. It has authorized peacekeeping missions in countries like Haiti, Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Security Council's effectiveness and decision-making process have been subjects of debate. Some argue for the need to reform the Council to reflect the changing global landscape and to enhance its representativeness and transparency. Nevertheless, the United Nations Security Council remains an essential international body for maintaining peace and security by addressing conflicts and promoting diplomatic solutions to global challenges.

2.3. Vision and Mission

The Security Council seeks to address threats to international security and to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace. It also aims to suppress acts of aggression, including war crimes, torture, human rights violations and other breaches of the peace.

In order to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources, the Security Council shall be responsible for formulating effective, partial and practical solutions, using military assistance if needed.

2.4. Structure

The United Nations Security Council is composed of 15 member countries. Out of these, five are permanent members with veto power: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, who were granted permanent membership after World War

II, and remain the main decision makers of the Security Council. Any of these members can veto a resolution, meaning that it cannot pass, even if the other members approve. The other ten members are elected by the General Assembly for two year terms, with five seats allocated to African and Asian countries, one to Eastern European countries, two to Latin American and Caribbean countries, and two to Western European and other countries. These countries do not have veto power, but participate in discussions, vote and help influence decisions. The presidency of the Security Council rotates each month among its members, and is responsible for overseeing meetings, ensuring procedures are followed and representing the Security Council in communication with other committees. The Security Council is responsible for maintaining international peace and security, and its decisions carry significant weight in matters such as imposing sanctions, authorizing peacekeeping missions, and taking action to address conflicts.

2.5. Movements and achievements

The United Nations Security Council has been responsible for addressing a wide range of international issues, and it is the unique power to enforce binding resolutions, impose sanctions, and authorize military interventions.

The Security Council has achieved several major accomplishments since its establishment, including:

- Creation of the UN peacekeeping missions.
- Issued ceasefire directives.
- Countering the finance of terrorism.
- Border security and arms trafficking.

- Legal issues.
- Human rights.
- Integrating gender into counter-terrorism.
- Countering violent extremism and terrorist narratives.
- Information and communications technologies.

Some of the major movements of the Security Council also include:

- Sanctions and diplomatic pressure.
- Freezing assets and travel bans on individuals involved in terrorism or human rights abuses.
- Establishing counterterrorism committees and frameworks.
- Preventing the spread of nuclear weapons.
- Approving the use of force to protect civilians.
- Mandating ceasefires and peace negotiations.

III. Topic A: Monopolizing Control: The Venezuelan Crisis

3.1. Introduction of the topic

An unresolved conflict of decadence and a questionable series of events have left citizens in despair for more than a decade in the Southern American country of Venezuela. The deep economical and political crisis has forced millions to flee the country, and those that remain live in fear of the regime, struggling with the declining quality of life index.

Hugo Chávez first rose to prominence as a military officer during a failed coup attempt in 1992, following several riots that left Venezuela's democratic state shattered. Gaining popularity after being released from prison, Chavez ran for president and was elected in 1994. He was initially seen as a leader with bold initiatives, promising to uplift the poor, redistribute wealth in the oil-rich nation, and end corruption. Chávez's charisma and rhetoric captivated many, positioning him as a champion of the people.

However, it soon became apparent that his policies were deeply rooted in communist ideologies. His government gradually centralized power, nationalized key industries, and pursued an aggressive anti-capitalist agenda. These actions, while popular among some, ultimately led to economic decline, political repression, marches against the government and coups, and widespread corruption.

¡Expropiese!" came the cry from Hugo Chavez, a command which has come to fill private investors in Venezuela with dread: "Expropriate it!" ...

Alongside them are Latin American companies like Agroisleno, Sidetur, Exito and Cemex. Between them, they cover a wide array of economic sectors in Venezuela. Banking, agriculture, tourism, energy, construction and steel production have all been affected by the government's decision to intervene in private ownership over the past year. Banco Santander received \$1bn (£620m) compensation. Others are still waiting.

(BBC NEWS, Grant; 2010)

In the year 2000, Hugo Chavez is reelected as president, and voters approve a new constitution that raises the presidential term to six years. After being reelected for the fourth time, Hugo Chavez appoints Nicolas Maduro as his vice president in 2012, and following Chavez's death in 2013 Maduro becomes the 53rd president of Venezuela. After winning a narrow and contested election, his presidency began under a cloud of tension and uncertainty. Early on, the country faced severe economic challenges, and Maduro attempted to curb the economic collapse by printing money, pushing the country into years-long hyperinflation. Skyrocketing prices led to severe shortages of basic necessities, such as medicine and food, inciting nationwide protests and riots in 2014. The government's harsh response resulted in numerous deaths and the arrest of opposition leaders, while attempts to stabilize the economy largely failed.



(El País; 2014, 13 marzo)

In 2015, the opposition won a supermajority in the National Assembly, marking a significant defeat for Maduro. However, in 2016, the Supreme Court, controlled by Maduro's allies, stripped the Assembly of its powers, deepening the political crisis. The opposition's attempt to remove Maduro through a recall referendum was blocked, further intensifying public unrest.

The crisis escalated in 2017 when the Supreme Court attempted to dissolve the National Assembly, triggering massive protests. In response, Maduro created a new Constituent Assembly, which replaced the National Assembly and consolidated his power. Maduro's widely condemned presidential election in 2018, was marked by boycotts and accusations of fraud. The elections, along with the creation of the new Constituent Assembly, led to international isolation for his government.

In 2019, two weeks after the National Assembly declared Maduro's election illegitimate, opposition leader Juan Guaidó declared himself interim president, until free and fair elections could be held, gaining recognition from several countries, including the U.S. However, Maduro maintained control, even as the situation in Venezuela worsened, with economic collapse and widespread humanitarian issues driving millions to flee the country.



(US Embassy Montevideo; 23 January, 2019)

By 2023, Venezuela remained in crisis, with hyperinflation, shortages, countrywide blackouts and a crumbling healthcare system. After years of denying the existence of a humanitarian crisis, Maduro allowed the entry of a shipment of emergency supplies from the Red Cross, however Maduro is currently being investigated by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes against humanity and the employment of armed gangs to suppress the opposition. Additionally, international and domestic pressure continued to build on Maduro to hold free and fair elections in 2024.

3.2. Current Situation

After the 2024 presidential elections in Venezuela, the country has been engulfed in a political and social crisis. Nicolás Maduro was declared the winner, but the opposition, led by Edmundo González and María Corina Machado, has rejected the results, claiming widespread electoral fraud. They allege they hold irrefutable proof of their victory, citing voting tallies that contradict the official results. This has led to large-scale protests across the country, with demonstrators accusing the government of rigging the election (Sáenz & Sáenz, 2024).

Independent observers such as the Carter Center and the Colombia Electoral Mission, have found the opposition tallies to be legitimate, giving Edmundo González a clear victory with 67% against Maduro's 30%.



(El Confidencial, 2024)

The situation has been marked by violent clashes between protesters and security forces, with reports of deaths, mass arrests, and a general climate of repression. Over 2,400 people have been detained facing terrorism charges, and international organizations, including the UN, have expressed concern over the state's use of force and the suppression of dissent (UN News, 2024)



(El País, 2024)

Additionally, Nicolas Maduro faces allegations for his involvement in “*El Cartel de Soles*,” a drug trafficking organization formed by high-government Venezuelan officials, and reportedly run by Maduro. The Cartel has been involved in violent narco-terrorist conspiracies with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), providing military-grade weapons and aiding the shipment of tons of cocaine. Nicolas Maduro faces charges for narco-terrorism conspiracy, conspiracy to use and carry machine guns, among several other charges, raising the reward presented by the United States to 25 million dollars for information leading to his arrest or conviction. (US Department of State, 2025)

While Maduro's government claims foreign interference is behind the unrest, the international community, particularly from Latin American countries, has largely condemned the election results and called for transparency or new elections (Sáenz & Sáenz, 2024).

Despite international pleas for new elections, Nicolas Maduro was sworn in as president of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on January 10, 2025, culminating more

than 5 months of dispute over the elections. During his first speech after being sworn in Maduro stated, “*We’ve achieved what we knew we would achieve,*” following support by the Nicaraguan and Cuban presidents in attendance.

Facing security threats, escalating political persecution, and an arrest warrant citing charges of falsification and conspiracy, Edmundo Gonzales was forced to leave Venezuela, in September, pledging to return to Caracas when Maduro was sworn in, but was ultimately unable to do so. Opposition members, leaders and supporters continue to face violence, with a Human Rights Report claiming that at least 24 protesters have been murdered, including a 15 year old. Maria Corina was also kidnapped for several hours, and those taken to detention centers face torture, abuse and inhumane treatment at the hands of the SEBIN, facing no clear conviction.

Despite these tensions, Maduro continues to hold power, supported by external key allies like Russia and China, and retaining control over the military, while opposition leaders face increasing threats, including arrest warrants. The country remains in a precarious state as the political standoff continues.

3.3. Factors affected by the issue

Venezuela has been affected in multiple aspects since Hugo Chavez rose to power. The country has faced significant challenges due to political unrest, economic decline, and acute shortages of vital resources such as electricity, food and medicine.

Amid a humanitarian crisis in 2018 and 2019, thousands fled the country on foot daily, most trying to cross into Colombia through the Simon Bolivar International Bridge in Cucuta.



(Global Conflict Tracker 2024)

The situation was greatly aggravated when Venezuela's poorly maintained infrastructure led to days-long country-wide blackouts that left millions of people without power.

Additionally, the government has been unable to provide healthcare and sanitation services, causing outbreaks of infectious diseases. Venezuelans faced severe shortages of food and medicine, compounded by the fact that Maduro refused foreign aid (calling it a ploy by the United States Government and only allowing aid from the Red Cross), the country entered into a deep state of crisis.

The crisis has greatly worsened since 2015 forcing seven million Venezuelans to find refuge in other Latin American countries. Many of these displaced citizens were not allowed to re enter the country to exercise their right to vote in the 2024 elections. Armed groups residing near the Colombian-Venezuelan border have also taken advantage of this situation, which further endangers migrants' lives. The refugee crisis also strains host countries which struggle to absorb the millions of refugees. Many of them can not provide access to services, leaving Venezuelan families homeless.

Beyond this, the psychological impact and the destruction of the country's social fabric and reputation cannot be quantified.

3.4. Glossary of terms

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>CNE (National Electoral Council)</i> 	<p>The National Electoral Council of Venezuela is one of the five branches of the government that exercises electoral power; it was designed to be loyal to the</p>
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	revolution.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chavism</i> 	<p>It is a left-wing populist political ideology combining elements of democratic socialism and socialist patriotism. However it has been widely criticized by its corruption, and described as a state capitalist, where private owned companies are nationalized as state owned. This has been a huge factor in Venezuela's economic crisis, as of 2009, roughly 70% of Venezuela's gross domestic product was created by the private sector.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hyperinflation</i> 	<p>It is a severe form of inflation, which increases the price on goods and services. It is differentiated from inflation by its rates (hyperinflation is defined as inflation greater than 50% per month) and causes.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>National Assembly of Venezuela</i> 	<p>It is a unicameral body made up of several members who were elected by votes, partly by direct election in state-based voting districts and partly on a state-based party list proportional representation system. It is in charge of passing legislation and blocking any legislation proposed by the president. Also outlined in Article 187 in the 1999 Venezuelan Constitution it approves budgets and holds the power to start impeachment processes against government officials,</p>

	excluding the President.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>ICC (International Criminal Court)</i> 	The International Criminal Court (ICC) investigates and, where warranted, tries individuals charged with the gravest crimes of concern to the international community: genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of aggression.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Migration influx</i> 	An arrival of numerous people displaced from their country or certain regions, whether it be by voluntary actions or forced migration. The majority of Venezuelan migrants currently reside in Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, and Chile, often living in poverty.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Electoral Fraud</i> 	It is the process of illegally intervening with elections, national or regional, by vote rigging, voter fraud, or buying votes in one candidate's interest. Its aim is to change or influence the course of the election.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Boycotts</i> 	The withdrawal from commercial or social relations by a person, country, group or organization with purposes of punishing or protesting .
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Grupo de Lima</i> 	It is a multilateral body established following the Lima Declaration on the 8th of August 2017, it is composed of Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Chile,

	Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Saint Lucia. It has widely condemned the elections in Venezuela, and swears to contribute to the restoration of democracy in Venezuela, overcoming the social, political, economical and humanitarian crises.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Interim President</i> 	An individual temporarily fulfilling the role of President.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cartel de los Soles</i> 	It is one of the largest criminal organizations headed by members of the Venezuelan government and the Bolivarian National Armed Force. According to journalist Claudia Gurisatti, the cartel is led by Nicolas Maduro and Diosdado Cabello, lieutenant and vice president of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela. It has been running since 1990, and its main objective is trafficking cocaine; smuggling petroleum and gasoline; and controlling illegal mining activity in Venezuela, extracting gold, and other gemstones.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>SEBIN (Servicio Bolivariano de Inteligencia Nacional)</i> 	It is the national intelligence body, often described as the political police in the Bolivarian Revolution. In a report given by the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission it is concluded that the Venezuelan government used the SEBIN to identify political

	<p>dissidents, activists advocating for human rights and anyone who poses a threat to the government. These people are seized, kidnapped, tortured, sexually abused and receive inhuman treatment at the hands of the SEBIN.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bolivarian Revolution</i> 	<p>A historical political event that started when the late president Hugo Chavez rose to power in 1998.</p> <p>According to Chavez, its Bolivarian ideology encourages nationalism and a state-led authority.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV)</i> 	<p>Founded in March 2007 by Hugo Chavez, it was created with the purpose to merge all political parties involved in the Bolivarian Revolution. It holds a socialist ideology, affirming it to be the only peaceful way to overcome the capitalist system.</p>

3.5. Guiding Questions

1. Is the UN providing assistance to the people in Venezuela?
2. How has the Venezuelan government responded to the claims of fraud in the 2024 elections?
3. Who benefits from this situation?
4. What happens to the people seized by the SEBIN?
5. How does the Venezuelan government respond to the opposition?
6. Which human rights are being violated in Venezuela?
7. How does the wave of Venezuelan migrants affect the international community?
8. How have the oil reserves in Venezuela affected the crisis?
9. What role does your delegation play in the crisis?

IV. Topic B: Oppression in the Name of God: Religious Persecution in Iran

4.1. Introduction of the topic

An internal conflict lasting more than 40 years has left the country of Iran fractured, religion long being a defining force in Iran's history, shaping its culture, laws, and governance. However, it has also been considered by organizations such as the Human Rights Watch to be a tool of oppression, used to justify the persecution, torture and inhumane treatment of religious minorities, political dissidents, and reformed believers.

After the Islamic Revolution in 1979, which followed a series of mass protests led by Islamists, leftists, and intellectuals, the Shah was overthrown, ending the Pahlavi dynasty and 2,500 years of despotism, consolidating the Islamic Republic. On April 1st, 1979, Ruhollah Khomeini, an Islamist revolutionary, politician and religious leader, declared Iran an Islamic Republic, following overwhelming support in a national referendum.

After the downfall of the Shah, Khomeini introduced his constitution, which had been drafted by a makeshift Council of Experts composed of 80 clerics, most of whom had strong ties to Khomeini. This constitution is based on the principle of *Velayat-e-Faqih*, or jurisprudence of the Cleric, which gives absolute power to the supreme leader, who holds a lifelong position and is appointed by the Assembly of Experts. The current Supreme Leader is Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (since 1989).

The government quickly changed, left-wing, nationalist and intellectual leaders were removed from power, and a return to conservative values was enforced. Acts protecting women's rights were declared void and mosque-based revolutionary bands known as

“*komītehs*” patrolled the streets enforcing Islamic dress codes and dispatching impromptu justice on those that were perceived as enemies. Informal religious militias were formed, aiming to intimidate and repress political groups not under the control of the ruling Revolutionary Council and its sister, the Islamic Republican Party. The militias and the clerics made every effort to suppress Western cultural influence, and many of the Western-educated elite fled the country, fearing persecution and violence. It is said that the violence and brutality imposed by the militias and clerics often exceeded that which had taken place during the Shah rule (Britannica, 2025).



(Business Insider, 2022)

In 1981, the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) was founded in Tehran, establishing a broad coalition of democratic Iranian organizations and groups. The NCRI is an inclusive and pluralistic parliament-in-exile that has more than 500 members, including representatives of ethnic and religious minorities, representing a broad spectrum of political tendencies in Iran. It aims to establish a secular democratic republic in Iran, based on the separation of religion and state. There are five organizations represented in the NCRI, including the People’s Mojahedin Organization of Iran, the largest and most popular

resistance group in Iran, and women comprise 50% of the Council's members, ensuring a fair and equitable representation (Committees UK Parliament, 2020).

Since the Revolution, the Iranian government, under clerics, has enforced a strict representation of Twelver Shia Islam, which includes the rule of Tabarra or not associating with God's enemies. This has led to the systematic persecution of Bahá'ís, Christians, Sunnis, Jews, Atheists and even dissident Shia Muslims. The government uses blasphemy laws, apostasy charges, and religious morality mandates to silence those who challenge its authority. Even within the Shia majority (Shia Muslims represent 90-95% of Iran's population), those advocating for reforms, gender equality or freedom of speech, are often targeted by the government and labeled as enemies of Islam.

Religious oppression in Iran extends long beyond religious persecution and legal actions, it seeps into people's daily life, incorporating itself into routines. It shapes the way people dress, speak, act, and express their beliefs, or their lack to do so. Women, in particular, face the harsh repercussions of the regime, bearing the brunt of religiously justified oppression. A woman's access to employment, education, social benefits, proper healthcare, and even her mere public presence in society depends on complying with strict hijab laws. These are routinely enforced through a web of arbitrary rules, with harsh and violent punishment for those that do not follow the norms, with no justification for the sanctions they receive. However, despite its impact on women's rights and freedoms, the choice of a dress code for Iranian women was not taken up by organizations or institutions until recently, having been previously fought by the individual acts of millions of women across the country.

The battle for women's rights and a fair and equal treatment has spanned long before and after the 1979 Revolution, advocating for legal equality by promoting international human rights instruments. A key post-revolution initiative was the "One Million Signature Campaign" in 2006, which sought to repeal discriminatory laws facing marriage, inheritance, and guardianship, but surprisingly excluded the mandatory hijab. While the campaign did not achieve legal measures and legislative goals, it strengthened activist networks and legal advocacy.

During Mahmud Ahmadinejad's presidency from 2005-2013, state repression led to arrests and the forced exile of countless activists, especially after the Green Movement protests in 2009. Under Hassan Rouhani (2013-2022), the women's movement focused on achieving more representation in elected positions, greater women's attendance of sporting events, and better protection against sexual harassment in public as well as work spaces, but progress was limited due to judicial resistance.



(The Guardian, 2013)

The Iranian Green Movement emerged after the 2009 presidential elections, and faced significant repression from the Iranian government. They called for the annulment of the presidential victory of Mahmud Ahmadinejad, claiming fraud and symbolizing hope and unity. Authorities arrested numerous activists, journalists and reformist politicians including former vice-president Mohammed-Ali Abtahi and former presidential advisor Saeed Hajjarian. Those who were not arrested were forced into exile, facing severe security threats attempting against their lives.

Security forces also targeted students protesting, leading to clashes at universities and detentions. However, these actions were part of a broader strategy to suppress dissent and maintain political power and order. Several journalists were also detained, limiting coverage of the protests and international communication. Despite these measures, the Green Movement persisted, symbolizing the fight for political reform, equality and civil rights in Iran. Ultimately, the state's repressive tactics significantly slowed the movement's momentum and the ability to effect change during that period, however the movement stays alive nowadays, representing hope for millions of Iranian citizens.

Despite international condemnation and sanctions, Iran's leadership remains committed to ideological and religious control, using faith not only as a governing measure, but as a weapon to silence opposition and maintain power. Religious oppression in Iran is a multidimensional problem, exploring historical roots and modern views as it sheds light on the complex relationship between faith, governance, justice and human rights.

4.2 Current Situation

Iran has been enveloped in times of turmoil and political uncertainty following the 2022 Mahsa Amini protests, with international organizations, such as the UN calling on Iranian authorities to stop the persecution and harassment of religious minorities, ending the use of religion to curtail the exercise of fundamental rights.

The 2022 Mahsa Amini protests started on September 16 of 2022, with the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini. Amini had been arrested by the morality police in Tehran three days earlier for allegedly violating Iran's strict rules requiring women to cover their hair with a hijab or scarf. Iran's state coroner attributed her death to pre-existing medical conditions, but a UN human rights expert said the evidence established that she died "as a result of beatings" by morality police (BBC, 2023).

After Mahsa Amini's death, protests quickly emerged, first taking place in the western city of Saqqez. The protests took the name of "Woman, Life, Freedom," representing the fight for equality, political representation and the extent of the control the government had exercised on women. The unrest spread rapidly across the country with demands ranging from more freedoms to an overthrow of the state. Women played a central role in the protests, publicly removing and burning hijabs, cutting their hair, and chanting "*Jin, Jiyan, Azadi*," which stands for women, life and freedom in Kurdish. The protests escalated to national scales, heaving a tremendous amount of support compared to past cases. Schoolgirls, men, teenage boys, and even clerics took to the streets, challenging Iran's compulsory hijab laws and gender oppression.

However, the Iranian regime responded with a harsh government crackdown, deploying security forces that violently suppressed the protests, using live ammunition, tear gas, mass arrests, and punishing those that did not wear the hijab with the death sentence. More than 22,000 people were arrested, with many facing torture and long prison sentences; and over 500 protestors were killed, including children.



(Teen Vogue, 2022)

According to the Human Rights Watch (HRW), family members of dozens of people killed, executed or imprisoned during the protests were arrested on trumped up charges, threatened or harassed. Ultimately, the protests died down, having failed their goal to bring change to Iran. If anything; though they did cause severe international commotion and brought awareness to the human rights violation in Iran, the protests only made the ruling Supreme Leader look stronger, further strengthening his image as an untouchable ruler.

Since the Mahsa Amini protests, Iran has tightened enforcement of conservative social values and continued to suppress dissent whilst grappling with ongoing economic and social issues.

4.3 Factors affected by the issue

In the aftermath of the 2022 “Woman, Life, Freedom” uprising, authorities further suppressed the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, and intensified their crackdown on women and girls defying compulsory veiling laws. Security forces crushed protests using unlawful force and mass arrests. Thousands were subjected to interrogation, arbitrary detention, unjust prosecution, and imprisonment for peacefully exercising their human rights. Enforced disappearances, and torture and other ill-treatment were widespread and systematic. Women and girls, LGBTI people, and ethnic and religious minorities were subjected to systemic discrimination and violence. Cruel and inhuman punishments, including flogging, were imposed and implemented. The use of the death penalty as a tool of political repression intensified and executions increased. Trials remained systematically unfair. Systemic impunity prevailed for past and ongoing crimes against humanity relating to prison massacres in 1988 and other crimes under international law (Amnesty International).



(Arab News, view inside of an Irani Prison).

Additionally, many wrongfully imprisoned prisoners have shared their story of abuse and intimidation they experienced in prisons after being arrested for exercising their right to protest. Protestors go through psychological interrogations blindfolded, many blackmailed with the threat of arresting other family members. Prisoners are hardly given food, and their judicial processes are delayed for years, having been kept on unjustifiable charges. Above physical abuse, the psychological impact and exploitation of prisoners cannot be quantified.

Furthermore, Iran has strategically employed terrorist groups as proxies in its foreign policy, using these groups to wield influence across the Middle East and beyond, establishing power and transmitting fear. From Iran's longtime financial support of Hezbollah in Lebanon, to its backing of militias in Iraq and Yemen, Iran's utilization of proxy groups has shaped regional dynamics, fueled conflicts, and has further pushed the hope for global peace.

4.4 Glossary of terms

<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Proxy Wars	<p>A proxy war is a military conflict where a major power supports a third party to fight on its behalf. They provide weapons, funding, or troops to allied groups or nations. The major power does not directly participate in the war.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Sunni Muslims	<p>Sunni Islam is the largest branch of Islam, with between 85% and 90% of the world's Muslim population. Sunni Islam is the largest religion in Afghanistan (between 84.7% and 89.7% of Afghanistan's population is Sunni Muslim), and is the state religion of the Islamic Emirate. However, Sunni-majority provinces in Iran are neglected by the government, leading to socio-economic disenfranchisement and high rates of poverty.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Shia Muslims	<p>Shia Muslims are a branch of Islam that follow the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad and his descendants. They are the second largest branch of Islam, after Sunni Islam. Between 90% and 95% of Iran's</p>

	<p>Muslims are Shia, according to the CIA World Factbook. This makes Iran one of the few countries in the world where Shia Muslims are the majority. Sunni and Shia Muslims have been involved in conflicts for centuries, often over power and resources. These conflicts have taken place in many countries, including Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Pakistan, and Yemen.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revolutionary Council 	<p>The Revolutionary Council of Iran was a governing body established by Ayatollah Khomeini in January 1979 to oversee the transition from the Pahlavi monarchy to the Islamic Republic. It played a key role in drafting laws, dissolving the monarchy, and forming the new government after the Iranian Revolution. The council was dissolved in July 1980 after the creation of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Parliament).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sharia Law 	<p>Sharia is a system of Islamic laws that guide Muslims in their daily lives. It covers religious and secular practices, including how to pray, do business, and govern. Sharia</p>

	is derived from the Quran, the Sunnah, and the Hadith.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apostasy Laws 	Apostasy laws are laws that punish people for changing their religion. These laws vary by country and can include the death penalty, imprisonment, or loss of property. In Iran apostasy is punishable by death though executions are rare.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Council of Resistance of Iran 	<p>The National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) is a Paris-based opposition coalition founded in 1981, aiming to overthrow Iran's regime and establish a secular democracy.</p> <p>Led by Maryam Rajavi, its key goals include free elections, human rights, gender equality, and nuclear disarmament. The NCRI is active in exposing Iran's nuclear activities, advocating for regime change, and documenting human rights abuses.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supreme Leader 	The Supreme Leader of Iran is the country's highest authority, controlling politics, military, and religion. He oversees the government, judiciary, and armed forces,

	<p>with the final say on major policies.</p> <p>Appointed for life by the Assembly of Experts, the current leader is Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (since 1989).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Iranian Green Movement 	<p>The Iranian Green Movement was a pro-democracy protest movement that emerged after the 2009 presidential election, which many believed was rigged to re-elect Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Millions protested, demanding fair elections, civil rights, and political reforms. The government responded with a violent crackdown, arrests, and internet censorship. Though suppressed, the movement influenced later protests and continues to inspire calls for change in Iran.</p>

4.5 Guiding Questions

1. What are the main forms of religious persecution in Iran?
2. How does the Iranian government justify its human rights violation claims on religion?
3. How does Iran's persecution of religious minorities impact their access to basic human rights?
4. How does Iran's legal system, (sharia law, blasphemy laws, apostasy laws) contribute to religious oppression?
5. How have the protests helped to shape new opposition currents in Iran?
6. What is your delegation's stance on religious oppression?
7. How has the United Nations addressed religious persecution in Iran?
8. How has religious persecution in the Middle East shape governments?
9. How does Iran's state-controlled media contribute to discrimination and violence against religious minorities?
10. What forms of torture and inhumane treatment do imprisoned religious minorities and activists face?
11. How has Iran used public executions, floggings, and long-term imprisonment to silence religious dissidents?

V. Expectations & recommendations from the chair

The chair expects all delegates to come prepared beforehand and to act accordingly to the situation at hand, one that affects political, social and economic aspects. The chair expects delegates to treat the situation accordingly, acting with respect and authority, understanding the seriousness of the issue at hand. Moreover it expects delegates to make structured interventions, ones that affect the trajectory of the committee.

The chair wants to encourage delegates to use and cite articles, news and other reliable sources that will greatly support delegate's interventions. The chair also recommends investigating and exploring all aspects of this very broad conflict at hand, so the debate can proceed in an open and fluent manner. Moreover, it encourages delegates to prepare interventions that support the country's position whilst also giving insight into other countries' position on the conflict.

The chair also wants to remind delegates that whilst there is time for debate, the main purpose of the committee is to find alliances and present viable solutions that benefit civilians and solve the conflict at hand. We will also like to encourage delegates, if the situation presents itself, to treat crises as your delegation will see fit, using the crisis to your delegations advantage. Don't be afraid to make changes and present solutions that will traditionally be viewed as unreasonable, sometimes the best ideas come from those that are unpredicted.

Below you can find a text referring to each delegation's position on the matters at hands, and their viewpoint on the crises. This was created with the intention of helping you establish a firm foundation for your speech and your role throughout the debate. We recommend you to read your delegation's position as well as the other ones, to inform and prepare yourselves.

Following all these recommendations, the chair expects to have an heartening and fulfilling debate, where all delegates can and will participate.

VI. Countries' positions on the topics at hand

Topic A: Monopolizing Control: The Venezuelan Crisis

Argentina:

Argentina holds a firm position against the Venezuelan government, with their current president Javier Milei, being one of the firsts to speak after the 2024 elections. In a video uploaded by Milei, he claimed Maduro's victory was weak and stated that he had won through electoral fraud. Furthermore he went on to call Maduro a dictator, affirming also that the "Venezuelan lions had awoken" and that soon, socialism would come to an end, calling it a form of government that impoverishes its citizens. Currently the Argentine government is not recognizing Maduro as president of Venezuela, and they have just called on the ICC (International Criminal Court) to issue an arrest warrant for Mr. Maduro. They argue that his recent actions constitute against the integrity of humanity, and they ask for Maduro and his close circle to be prosecuted. Additionally, the Venezuelan government has revoked consent of the Brazilian government having custody over the Argentine Embassy in Caracas, where six opposition members resided since March. The Brazilian government was handed the control of the Argentine and Peruvian Embassies after their diplomats were ordered out of the country by Maduro.

Chile:

Following the 2024 presidential elections, Gabriel Boric, Chile's President, stated on his social media that "Chile does not recognize the false win auto proclaimed victory of Nicolas Maduro and his followers". Additionally Boric has gone on to call Maduro's presidency a dictatorship that punishes those who think differently and is indifferent to one of the greatest exiles in history.

Chile however, is the only leftist Latin American government that has spoken against Maduro regarding the 2024 elections, joining all the other right-wing governments claiming Maduro's win a fraud.

China:

China has been one of Maduro's longest standing allies, backing his government and even going as far offering to help rebuild the national power grid in the 2018 and 2019 crisis. China's political, economical and diplomatic unconditional support has been crucial help to Maduro, and Chavez in the past, helping them keep their regime in power. Venezuela's dependence on China has become increasingly evident, with China being their main monetary lender. This has helped keep the Chavista Social Program alive, with the loans committed to future oil production. These loans have extended upward of 62 billion dollars. China and Maduro continue keeping close ties with each other, benefiting from their ends of the bargain.

Colombia:

Colombia has been said to be the country struggling the most from Venezuela's crisis and its repercussions, with nearly 2.5 million Venezuelan refugees entering Colombia. During ex President Ivan Duque's term, from 2018 to 2022, Maduro's government was not recognized by Colombia. However when President Gustavo Petro rose to power in 2022,

relations with Venezuela were restored, with Maduro going as far as saying that his “Colombian friends were up to anything.”

Colombia, however, criticized Maduro’s decision of preventing the inscription of candidates in the presidential race. Ran by a leftist government, Colombia has not spoken about the 2024 elections, but Maduro and Petro continue to hold close ties.

Cuba:

“Venezuela can count on Cuba for anything” were the words stated by Cuban president, Miguel Diaz-Canel.

During Chavez’s presidency ties with Cuba were greatly strengthened, which were later held up by Maduro. Their ties depend solely on petroleum, with Venezuela giving petroleum to Cuba in exchange for Cuban military and intelligence, helping Maduro stay in power; aid, being it medical and technical. However this exchange has started straining each country, making it difficult to hold up their end of the bargain. Cuba’s limited petroleum refinery power has taken a toll on the country’s electricity, and Cubans have gone through blackouts and difficulty accessing drinkable water.

This relationship has become oppressive in Venezuela and Cuba, with both countries suffering social and economical crises, however their ties are still intact.

France:

France has several times recognized opposition members as presidents of Venezuela, joining other countries asking Maduro to hold democratic elections in 2019. France, along with other European countries have imposed sanctions on Nicolas Maduro and his government, and have evacuated staff from its oil companies that were previously stationed in Venezuela.

Iran:

Iran's government has taken to social media to congratulate Maduro's victory in the elections. Iranian diplomats have stated Maduro's win is the road to democracy in Venezuela, and that his victory institutionalized democracy in Venezuela. Iran has also called the sanctions imposed in Venezuela unjust and cruel.

Iran and Venezuela hold close bilateral ties sharing a mutual enemy, the United States, with Iran "supporting and giving solidarity to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to advance in its national programs of development."

Nicaragua:

Nicaragua has supported Maduro's government, having a similar regime in their country. Their president, called a dictator by the International Community, Daniel Ortega has had two terms in power, the earliest one from 1985 to 1990, and the most recent one from 2007 to the present. Nicaragua's government holds a close structure of punishment similar to that of Venezuela, seizing opposition members, journalists, and anyone else who speaks against the government. They also give harsh punishments to NGO (non-governmental organizations) members, and leaders of the Catholic church. Venezuela is often said to be following Nicaragua's steps.

Panama:

Panama's president, Jose Raul Mulino, was one of the first to call out Maduro following the 2024 elections. Mulino went on to state "*I think international pressure has increased. Maduro is increasingly isolated. And I believe that we must not stop making the*

effort that must be made to help Venezuelans regain their freedom and their democracy,"
(BBC).

Panama has been one of the countries receiving large numbers of Venezuelan migrants, several making the trek through the Darien Gap looking to reach the United States.

Russia:

Russia has been a longtime supporter of the Maduro regime, even going as far as sending Russian troops to Venezuela in 2019 and helping the Venezuelan government evade sanctions on the oil industry.

United Kingdom:

The United Kingdom has taken measures against Maduro, some including freezing Venezuela's gold reserves stored in the UK in 2019. Their official position regarding the 2024 elections is similar to that of the European Union and the United States.

United States:

The United States holds a firm opposition to Maduro's government, imposing oil sanctions. The USA recognizes the opposition as the legitimate elected government of Venezuela, calling them the road to democracy in Venezuela. Recently it has imposed new sanctions, regarding the exile of presidential candidate Edmundo Gonzalez. The US has also spoken widely of the human rights' violations committed in Venezuela. However, the United States in the past, has raised some of its sanctions in exchange for American citizens held in Venezuela, but Maduro did not hold up his part of the bargain.

Topic B: Oppression in the Name of God: Religious Persecution in Iran

Afghanistan:

Afghanistan has not publicly articulated an official stance on the issue of religious persecution in Iran. Both nations have complex histories concerning religious freedom, particularly regarding their respective Shia in Iran and Sunni in Afghanistan Muslim populations. In Afghanistan, religious minorities, including Christians, Ahmadis, Baha'is, Hindus, and Sikhs, face significant persecution and societal discrimination, and since the Taliban's return to power in August 2021, reports indicate that the situation for these minorities has further deteriorated, with many going into hiding or fleeing the country. Given these internal challenges, Afghanistan's government has not taken a public position on religious persecution in Iran.

China:

China has not publicly criticized Iran's record on religious persecution. Both nations have been identified by the U.S. Department of State as "Countries of Particular Concern" due to severe violations of religious freedom, this mutual designation reflects the systematic oppression against religious minorities in both countries. The strong diplomatic and economic ties between China and Iran may influence China's silence on Iran's internal religious policies, however China does have a foreign policy that emphasizes non-interference in the domestic affairs of other nations.

France:

France has consistently expressed concern over religious persecution in Iran, particularly against Bahá'ís. During the Mahsa Amini protests, France's Foreign Minister, Catherine Colonna, summoned the Iranian ambassador to condemn the Iranian government's actions,

which included the arrests of French citizens and the extraction of forced confessions under duress. France also announced its support for European Union sanctions and the freezing of Iranian assets. France has actively condemned religious persecution in Iran and has taken diplomatic actions, both unilaterally and in coordination with international partners, to address these human rights concerns.

Iraq:

Iraq has not publicly criticized Iran's treatment of religious minorities. Both nations share strong political, economic, and religious ties, particularly through their majority Shia Muslim populations. Domestically, Iraq faces its own challenges regarding religious freedom. Iran-backed Shia militias have been implicated in targeting Christian communities, contributing to their displacement. Given these internal issues and its close relationship with Iran, Iraq has remained silent on the topic of religious persecution in Iran.

Israel:

Israel has consistently condemned Iran's persecution of religious minorities, particularly Christians. In 2018, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expressed "complete solidarity" with persecuted Christians in Iran, highlighting their brutal treatment and imprisonment. Israeli media outlets have also reported on Iran's systematic campaign against religious minorities, emphasizing the regime's efforts to diminish Christian presence in the Middle East. These actions reflect Israel's ongoing commitment to supporting persecuted religious minorities in Iran.

Pakistan:

Pakistan has not publicly criticized Iran's treatment of religious minorities, however both nations share strong historical, religious, cultural, and linguistic bonds, which likely influence Pakistan's stance. Internally, Pakistan faces significant challenges regarding religious freedom. Religious minorities, including Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Shias, and Ahmadis, often face discrimination and violence. Pakistan's legal system is also based on Sharia law, however it also includes English common law and customary law, leading to a more open minded regime.

Russia:

Russia has not publicly criticized Iran's treatment of religious minorities. Both countries have been identified by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) as engaging in severe violations of religious freedom. The USCIRF has recommended that Russia be designated as a "country of particular concern" due to its systematic and ongoing violations of religious freedoms. Internally, Russia has been reported to suppress religious minorities, including Jehovah's Witnesses and certain Protestant groups. In occupied regions of Ukraine, Russian forces have been accused of targeting evangelical communities, with reports of interrogations, imprisonments, and destruction of places of worship. Given these internal issues, and Russia's strategic alliance with Iran, Russia has remained silent on the topic of religious persecution in Iran.

Saudi Arabia:

Saudi Arabia has historically criticized Iran's treatment of religious minorities, particularly regarding the persecution of Sunni Muslims, with Saudi Arabia positioning

themselves as the protector of Sunni Islam. However, Saudi Arabia has also faced its own religious persecution allegations as the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has reported that the Saudi government continues systematic persecution of individuals based on their religious beliefs. These violations include targeting religious minorities and dissidents, often through the Specialized Criminal Court, which imposes harsh sentences and denies due process. However, in March 2023, China brokered a diplomatic agreement to normalize relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia, leaving hope for diplomatic relations in the future.

United Arab Emirates:

The United Arab Emirates has not publicly criticized Iran's treatment of religious minorities, as it maintains a policy of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other nations. It is important to note that the UAE has made internal efforts to promote religious tolerance, although it imposes restrictions on religious practices and requires religious groups to register with authorities.

United Kingdom:

The United Kingdom has consistently expressed concern over religious persecution in Iran, particularly regarding the treatment of Christian converts. Furthermore, the UK government has criticized Iran's human rights record in international forums, drawing attention to the persecution of religious and ethnic minorities. In its submissions to the United Nations, the UK highlighted executions of juvenile offenders and the deteriorating right to freedom of expression in Iran.

United States:

The United States has long condemned Iran's persecution of religious minorities and has taken various actions to address these violations including sanctions on those presumed responsible for human rights violations. Furthermore, the US has actively participated in international forums to highlight and condemn Iran's religious persecution, as it aims to hold the Iranian government accountable for its actions and advocate for the rights of persecuted religious communities within Iran.

Venezuela:

Venezuela has not publicly criticized Iran's treatment of religious minorities. The two nations share a strong alliance, collaborating in sectors like oil and energy. This close relationship likely influences Venezuela's silence on Iran's internal religious policies. Internally, Venezuela faces its own challenges regarding religious freedom. Religious leaders have reported harassment and intimidation, particularly when criticizing the government's handling of humanitarian issues, during the Maduro dictatorship. Despite this, the Venezuelan Interreligious Forum continues to promote dialogue between different religious communities.

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