

Sri Lanka
Model United Nations



General Assembly Plenary

Study Guide

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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Established under the Chapter 3, Article 7 of the United Nations Charter, the General assembly is one of the Principal organs of the United Nations Charter. It is the only body in which all member nations are present at any given point and each member state is entitled to an equal vote. For this reason, the General Assembly has the ability to discuss any given topic, given that it falls under the scope of the UN charter and also may make recommendations to other UN bodies and/or member states, except as said in Clause 1 of Chapter 4, article 12 in the UN Charter.

Given this nature and prominence of the General Assembly, the UN Charter limits the powers given to the General Assembly to further ensure that the actions of such a body may not lead to or magnify any international disputes which are almost always sensitive and volatile. Therefore, the powers are mainly limited to making recommendations, acting as a platform for making international agreements which makes the resolution of non-legally binding nature.

To fully understand the powers allowed to the General Assembly, delegates are encouraged to read the fourth chapter of the UN charter. Since SLMUN 2018 differs with that of previous years in the aspect of having a single unified General Assembly with its full scope similar to the actual UNGA as opposed to a multitude of separate General Assemblies each with a narrower specified scope in previous years, it is needless to say that the General Assembly stimulated as SLMUN 2018 is allowed the full scope of discussion allowed at a session of the United Nations General Assembly without any considerations of a narrower mandate. Therefore, delegates are reminded that at SLMUN 2018, they are required to engage in a CONSTRUCTIVE discussion that focuses on all aspects of the topic as long as it is understood to be under the scope of the UN charter.

THE AGENDA

Conference topic: Discussing the need for Riot Control in Developing Nations.

Practice Debate topic: Addressing the needs of migrants and refugees in Developing Countries.

CONFERENCE TOPIC: DISCUSSING THE NEED OF RIOT CONTROL IN DEVELOPING NATIONS

BACKGROUND

What is a riot? It is important throughout the discussion of this issue that delegates are continuously aware of the difference between a protest and a riot. Although is subjective and depends on what source you are referring to a riot usually involves physical damage to property or other persons while a protest is just a public display of disapproval. This is important as different nations may also have varying definitions and hence affect the respective foreign policies.

The issue of riot control, by its very nature, very complex as it involves multitude of factors. First being the issue of domestic sovereignty being the overriding factor that highly limits the function of the UN in this matter. Next is the consideration of human rights and civil liberties in the question. There is the issue of weaponry used in the control and mitigation of riots. Delegates are expected to be aware in detail about each of these issues during conference.

It is also important to note that the commonly available methods of riot control are now gradually overused and therefore will sooner or later expand the need for broader measures. Currently technologies such as Active Denial systems (ADS) and Long Range Acoustic Device (LRAD) Sound Cannons are available but not so prevalent, therefore, they are yet to come into proper consideration by the international community.

It is also important to understand the context of developing nations, their economic, political and social conditions that then translate to a different pattern of rioting that is different from that of developed nations.

This guide will help to understand the political and social climates surrounding two notable riots in developing nations and then use that to point out several points to consider for a delegate at SLMUN 2018.

THE U.S. DEFINITION

The Code of the United States of America defines a riot as “public disturbance involving (1) an act or acts of violence by one or more persons part of an assemblage of three or more persons, which act or acts shall constitute a clear and present danger of, or shall result in, damage or injury to the property of any other person or to the person of any other individual or (2) a threat or threats of the commission of an act or acts of violence by one or more persons part of an assemblage of three or more persons having, individually or collectively, the ability of immediate execution of such threat or threats, where the performance of the threatened act or acts of violence would constitute a clear and present danger of, or would result in, damage or injury to the property of any other person or to the person of any other individual.

CASE STUDIES

ARGENTINA 2001

The origins of the problems of Argentina included the disastrous combination of the economic crises and the surge in the costs of living stemming from privatizations about a decade ago which then converted into a wave of anger against the government with the middle and low income levels of society. Soon, riots had developed in outer provinces and had spread to the capital by the December of 2001.

While the president wanted to use military force, the heads of the military quickly declined to do so pointing out constitutional limitations, therefore the president then moved to declare a state of emergency. By the 20th of December, the federal police was given instructions by the government to control and contain protesters, while a federal judge had unsuccessfully attempted to halt such measures. Either way, the government's plan failed when protesters from outside the capital poured into the city.

This was followed by the unsuccessful attempt by President Fernando de la Rúa to censor media outlets to stop the spreading of support for the protests. Then the President's attempts to stabilize the nation by calling on the opposition to join the government and to bring peace to the nation also failed, after which he resigned and took to safety.

Following his resignation, the legislature moved to elect Adolfo Rodríguez Saá the president till the March election were held. Although he moved to make several popular decisions including several political appointments, protests once again erupted. Soon after he too resigned after he realized he lacked support from within his own party after a failed summit.

THAILAND 2013-2014

The series of political instability in Thailand spanning from 2013 to 2014 is considerably one of the most significant cases of rioting and demonstrations as it not only follows a series of other such events that started in 2009 but also lead to 28 deaths and more than 800 injuries. It is also significant in the fact that it lead to a large number of changes to the sphere of Thai politics and Government. It is also significant in that it lasted for quite a long time and the multitude of events that happened that included shootings grenade attacks and bombings.

At first, it remained as non-violent demonstrations against several governmental actions lead by the opposition who called for civil-disobedience, which did gain momentum within several cities but was also shown to be quite unpopular by an independent poll.

Following the events of a failed constitutional amendment, protests grew and the Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra went to invoke the internal security act.

Up until the end of November the protests had been peaceful until the several protesting university students had been killed and injured by an armed supporter of the government.

Soon, the government was dissolved but the opposition was quick to call for the stepping down of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra as well, although she survived the motion of no confidence against her. There

were also several calls for the military to join the anti-government protests, which were rejected by the army commander.

The government claimed that it has restrained from using excessive force and instead was reserved to using methods such as batons, water cannons and tear-gas. However, on the 26th of December, the protesters clashed with the police at the Thai-Japanese sports stadium killing one from each side.

The next day, the army commander made a media statement without ruling out the possibility of a coup by the military.

After the first week of January 2014, anti-government protesters had occupied Bangkok, resulting in the obstruction of several government functions. The police was also reluctant to carry out several orders relating to opposition leaders given the volatility of the situation. A state of emergency was declared as a last resort by the prime-minister in early January.

As political tensions continued, mid-January recorded several failed and successful attacks including several grenade attacks, which resulted in several deaths along the line of attacks.

All this was followed by the chaotic February 2nd election. Several disruptions were recorded nationwide. Following the election, the Thai criminal court issued arrest warrants for 19 protest leaders.

The time of political unrest continued throughout the next couple of months with protests and riots continuing although the support for the protests dwindled compared to the beginning.

In early May, the constitutional court decided to remove the prime-minister from the office. However, violence still continued until a military coup on the 20th of May finally settled the time of violence.

POINTS TO CONSIDER

As delegates study these and other case studies, they are advised to observe and note the following aspects.

1. Influence of political activism on increasing tensions and confrontations between protestors and the government.
2. Unclear boundaries between what is considered a protest and not a riot.
3. Resolving Riots using an appropriate level of force?
4. At what measures should newer technologies and agents be used?
5. What role can the UN do to ensure the proper use of these newer technologies?
6. How can developed nations play a role in assisting developing nations make proper use of up to date technology?

Delegates are required to further research into these and other case studies especially with regards to the political climates that cause such riots how they are dealt with, both politically and physically.

It is also advisable to look at the now ongoing (as of April 2018) situation in the wet bank of Gaza where protests are occurring on the Israeli-Palestinian border, where the highly controversial border makes the unrest further complex and disputed on an international level.

They are also expected to be fully aware of the limitations of the power of the UN system with regards to these domestic affairs and how an international intergovernmental organization such as the UN can exercise

indirect pressure over such matters. It is also important that delegates are aware of the continuation of research into riot control measures and tactics.

Consideration of human-rights, the right of expression in particular.

1. Questions of the role of the international community , and by extension the UN, in formulating a humane protocol for riot control
2. Questions of how the UN and developing nations can take to curb protests from spiraling out to riots
3. The Question of *if* the use of riot control agents violate human rights then what other options are available?
4. Questions related to the use of military force to deal with protesters.

FURTHER READING

<http://www.weaponslaw.org/weapons/riot-control-agents>

<https://www.telesur.tv/english/opinion/To-Be-Gassed-Or-Not-To-Be-Gassed-That-Is-The-Question-20180330-0009.html>

<https://lawfareblog.com/blurred-distinction-between-armed-conflict-and-civil-unrest-recent-events-gaza>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/blogs/europe/2012/05/112441.html>

<https://gizmodo.com/what-is-the-lrad-sound-cannon-5860592>

PRACTICE DEBATE TOPIC: DISCUSSING THE NEEDS OF REFUGEES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

BACKGROUND

Along the years following the World War II, the immigrant and refugee situation has only gotten worse. This can be attributed to the increase in global conflicts, political instability, and long term wars and even in later years, Climate change.

Over the years, it has also become clear that it is usually developing countries that faces the largest amount of issues related to immigration and refugees. A report by the UNHRC in 2016 showed that 84% of all the forced immigrants were hosted by developing countries. Given the economic conditions in these countries, they too increasingly find it difficult to provide even the bare minimum for these displaced people. Therefore the issues of refugees and other migrants has truly evolved to a global crisis and thus a responsibility of every nation.

Although the issue does come into global spotlight quite often, the world has a whole is yet to take steps towards a long term solution to the issue.

For example, the **United Nations Refugee Convention** of 1951 is the principle legal document that outline the core value of **non-refoulement** and the process it lays out forms the foundations of the United Nations Refugee Agency's work, however this document is increasingly criticized as being outdated in the past couple of years.

It is also common for these immigrant to face high levels of many forms of discrimination, varying from social discrimination to systematic discrimination and even to physical abuse and sexual violence.

Although credit must be given to many Governmental and Non-Governmental organizations that have worked in the fields assisting these immigrant in many forms to their best ability, this is only a short term solution that runs on an ever restricting budget.

All these factors only emphasis the dire urge for a long term cohesive plan to resolve the issues related to migrants and refugees in particular in developing countries.

CASE STUDY

BANGLADESH (ROHINGYA CRISIS)

The ongoing crisis in the Rakhine state of Myanmar has lead for thousands of ethnic Rohigyas to flee from Myanmar into Bangladesh. However as it is well known, a developing nation with a struggling economy, Bangladesh finds it difficult to provide for the needs of these refugees. Therefore the task falls to other willing actors such as Non-Governmental Organizations and charities that too have highly limited budgets and capabilities.

What makes the situation even more difficult is the flood-prone monsoon climate of Bangladesh which places these starving refugees without clean drinking water prone to disease outbreaks. Adding on to the troubles are the large number of women, ranging from all ages, that have been raped and physically abused that require special care.

Although Bangladeshi Government has been quite welcoming of these refugees, the fact that it is already a very densely populated nation that has a weak economy with limited space available for refugee camps mean that it is not a long term home to these people who are indefinitely displaced.

POINTS TO CONSIDER

1. Specific causes of migration, in particular forced migrants, refugees for example, that has developed over the last couple of decades.
2. How political, social, humanitarian and economic patterns in developing nations affect immigrants.
3. Further cases of problems faced by immigrants in these nations (lack of political rights and cases of xenophobic and racist discrimination)
4. Discrimination faced by refugees in finding proper employment, education, medical treatment and other requirements.
5. Concerns related to the failure of proper vetting (spread of terrorism and diseases).
6. Concerns of outdated legal documents governing the international refugees.
7. Concerns of diminishing living conditions in refugee settlements, ranging from sanitation, healthcare, proper nutrition and clean water supplies.
8. Addressing legal concerns regarding the movement of refugees.
9. How the living conditions of refugee and immigrant communities can be improved.
10. The role of developed nations in assisting refugees in developing nations.
11. The role of NGOs in such situations.
12. The role of local governments in assisting immigrant, refugees in particular, in settling down in communities foreign to them.
13. Improving the vetting systems that are usually unnecessarily complicated and time taking, especially for forced migrants that require immediate asylum.
14. Issues of systematic discrimination faced by immigrants.

FURTHER READING

<https://bdnews24.com/bangladesh/2018/04/05/amnesty-international-supports-bangladeshs-position-on-rohingya-crisis-secretary-general-salil-shetty>

<http://www.unhcr.org/5943e8a34>

<https://www.worldvision.com.au/global-issues/world-emergencies/myanmar-bangladesh-refugee-crisis>