**Kennesaw State University High School Model United Nations Conference**

**United Nations Human Rights Council**

**February 28th - March 1st, 2025 Kennesaw, GA**

**Email: ksuhsmun2025@gmail.com**

*Delegates,*

We are pleased to welcome you all to the 2025 Kennesaw State University (KSU) High School Model United Nations Conference (HSMUN). My name is Milo Wilson and I have the honor of serving as your Director of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council (HRC). This is my third year being a part of Kennesaw State University’s HSMUN Conference. I have also spent three years competing with KSU’s Model UN team. I am currently a graduate student working on my Master's in Computer Science specializing in artificial intelligence here at KSU. A fun fact about me is that I enjoy playing card games like Magic: the Gathering, Marvel Snap, and Altered. I am excited to work with you all, and to facilitate your great legislation at this year's conference.

Our committee’s Assistant Director is Justin Lunney. Justin is a junior getting his degree in International Affairs, and this is his first year in KSU’s Model UN. Outside of Model UN, Justin is in the International Affairs Student Organization and History Club at KSU. A fun fact about Justin is that he has been playing guitar for 7 years.

 Our committee’s Chair is Gavin Bedell, a freshman working towards his Bachelor’s in Business Administration, focusing on economics. He has developed a keen interest in Model UN this semester and has taken the opportunity to use Model UN clubs as a platform for improving his public speaking skills in preparation for future career endeavors. A fun fact about him is that he enjoys reading and hopes to publish economic essays when he is older.

**The topics under discussion for the United Nations Human Rights Council:**

1. **Addressing Concerns About Housing During Times of Economic Change**
2. **Discussing the Difficulty of the Provision and Distribution of International Aid Within Conflict Zones**

Each Member State’s delegation within this committee is expected to submit a position paper presenting their ideas for both agenda topics. A position paper is a short essay describing your Member State’s history and position on the issues at hand. There are three key parts to any successful position paper: history, current status of the issue, and proposed solutions. Information for properly formatting the position papers, as well as valuable advice for writing a quality paper, can be found in the Delegate Preparation section of the HSMUN webpage (http://conference.kennesaw.edu/hsmun/). Delegates are reminded that papers should be no longer than two pages in length with titles in size 12 and text in size 10-12 Times New Roman. Citations should be footnoted in Chicago style formatting, like those used inside this guide. Furthermore, plagiarism in an academic setting is unacceptable and will nullify any score for the paper in question. During the grading process, we will be utilizing the university’s plagiarism checker. Wikipedia is a wonderful place to begin researching, but we highly encourage the use of peer-reviewed academic articles or trusted media sources. The objective of a position paper is to present the diplomatic position of your Member State on both agenda topics as accurately as possible. ***All position papers MUST be sent to ksuhsmun2025@gmail.com by February 21st, 2025. Late papers will be accepted until February 26th, 2025 with points penalized.***

**History of the Human Rights Council**

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights (CHR) was established in 1946 after World War II as the main international legislative body overseeing the protection and promotion of human rights.[[1]](#footnote-0) The CHR met for the first time in 1947 to draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The commission completed discussions in the following year and the United Nations General Assembly adopted the declaration on the 10th of December 1948.[[2]](#footnote-1)

In the following 20 years, the CHR continued to deliberate on and reinforce human rights standards. The commission worked with the General Assembly to adopt the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (INCHR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights in December 1966. The INCHR was not able to address human rights violations until 1967 when the Economic and Social Council authorized the CHR to address human rights violations. Once the Commission was able to, they set up systems to monitor and investigate any human rights violations throughout the globe.[[3]](#footnote-2)

In the 1990s the CHR focused more on attempting to provide aid in the form of advice and technical assistance to Member States to support human rights on a more regional level. The CHR was focused specifically on the right to adequate standards of living and addressing issues that disadvantaged groups and indigenous peoples face.[[4]](#footnote-3)

The CHR faced many shortcomings regarding members' obligations to human rights and thus was reformed in 2006.[[5]](#footnote-4) The United Nations General Assembly established the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) to strengthen, protect, and promote human rights. This new body had a limited number of Member States able to participate in the council at a time, 47 members in total.[[6]](#footnote-5) Each Member State appointed to the HRC are assigned by the General Assembly and can serve a maximum of two consecutive three-year terms on the council.[[7]](#footnote-6)

In March 2006, the HRC established the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). This is a yearly assessment of human rights within the 193 recognized United Nations (UN) Member States. The UPR treats each Member State equally in their assessment of the violation and promotion of human rights. The UPR’s assessments provide recommendations and assistance to Member States who struggle to uphold human rights.[[8]](#footnote-7)

In 2012 the HRC adopted the Resolution 20/12 Accelerating Efforts to Eliminate All Forms of Violence Against Women: Remedies Against Women Subjected to Violence. In this resolution, the council condemned all violent acts against women and girls, and asserted violators should be punished by law. This resolution goes on to address the issues of gender bias in legislation and law enforcement, encourages paying particular attention to women who may face abuse in marginalized groups, and supports many more just positions on the rights of women subjected to violence. This was the first resolution adopted by the HRC that addressed violence against women.[[9]](#footnote-8)

Recently, the HRC has addressed many issues, including the rights of children in online spaces. This includes recognizing that Member States and business enterprises should address the potential risks to children and support Member States that work to provide children with the ability to take legal action to hold platforms responsible for any proliferation of materials that may violate the rights of a child.[[10]](#footnote-9) The Human Rights Council is active and constantly addresses violations and any future issues that the people of the world may face.

1. **Addressing Concerns About Housing During Times of Economic Change**

***Introduction***

Adequate housing is a fundamental human right as laid out in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).[[11]](#footnote-10) Many Member States view housing as a form of investment instead of as a necessity that provides shelter to their citizens.[[12]](#footnote-11) Due to housing being a significant financial investment, many people live in temporary housing such as apartments. While in temporary housing citizens usually have to pay rent, if citizens fail to pay rent in a timely manner they are susceptible to being evicted.[[13]](#footnote-12) Other people may be making mortgage payments to lenders like a bank. Failure to make timely payments can lead to foreclosure, where the lender will go through the legal process of repossessing a home from a homeowner who has defaulted on their payments.[[14]](#footnote-13) This makes times of economic instability difficult for citizens who may be renting or paying off homes. The potential loss of employment, significant inflation, and or reduction of wages can lead to citizens being unable to afford the cost of their homes.

***History***

In 1929 the Great Depression ensued following a stock market crash, rising tariffs, and a massive increase in unemployment across the world.[[15]](#footnote-14) The main effects of this depression were felt by the United States of America (U.S.) although the economic collapse had further repercussions on the global economy. Australia, Britain, and Canada’s housing markets were all affected by the sharp economic downturn.[[16]](#footnote-15) This led to many evictions, defaults on loans, and mortgage arrears (late payments).[[17]](#footnote-16) Canada’s unemployment rate rose from around 4.2 percent in 1929 to 26.0 percent by 1932. While specifics on housing information during the Great Depression in Canada is limited, many landlords struggled to find tenants that could afford to pay rent. In cases like the city of Hamilton, Ontario, many citizens ended up leaving their homes due to the loss of job opportunities and being unable to pay for housing.[[18]](#footnote-17)

After the Second World War, the United Nations was established to promote international cooperation. The UN worked with representatives from each of its Member States, including the U.S., China, Soviet Union, France, Lebanon, and others; with this collaboration, the committee drafted the UDHR.[[19]](#footnote-18) On December 10, 1948, the UN General Assembly adopted the UDHR.[[20]](#footnote-19) The 25th article recognizes the right to a decent living standard, including housing.[[21]](#footnote-20) While the declaration is not legally binding it it lays the groundwork for the international regime on human rights.[[22]](#footnote-21)

In the late 1990s to early 2000s, Argentina faced economic depression due to hyperinflation, a default on public debt, and lacking financial policies to address the crisis.[[23]](#footnote-22) This depression increased the number of people in poverty to over 40 percent in Argentina.[[24]](#footnote-23) [[25]](#footnote-24) While large-scale economic action struggled to assist communities in this time of crisis, local communities came together to address these issues.[[26]](#footnote-25) These communities worked together to build shelter, provide food, and create clothing to make sure that their basic necessities were met at a time when their national economy failed them.[[27]](#footnote-26)

The Great Recession had many issues directly relating to home ownership and lending practices.[[28]](#footnote-27) This risky financial activity would make the global housing market tumultuous again around December 2007.[[29]](#footnote-28) The one problem was lenders giving out subprime leases, a home loan for prospective homeowners who may not be a secure investment for the collecting party.[[30]](#footnote-29) There are many more elements to this crisis the primary issue was large lenders like foreign and U.S.-based banks began to invest heavily in these insecure investments that offered a good stream of revenue.[[31]](#footnote-30)

This high-risk lending led to greatly increased access to homes, and many people who were on subprime leases.[[32]](#footnote-31) Eventually, the people who were on these subprime leases began to default on their debts. The number of defaults and foreclosures skyrocketed resulting in lenders and banks losing money due to the leasers being unable to pay their loans on properties.[[33]](#footnote-32) Since many people defaulted on what was often their only home many people had to leave their homes. The mass defaults combined with the crashing of stocks due to the amount of money that financial institutions ended up paying, resulted in many people worldwide losing their homes and jobs during the recession.

***Current Situation***

The global real estate market is currently in good health with an estimated value of over $600 trillion USD by the end of 2024, a majority being residential real estate.[[34]](#footnote-33) While the market is not the only factor for determining the current health of housing worldwide, it is a good barometer for understanding homeowner security. The primary issue with the housing market is that there is a lack of affordable housing.[[35]](#footnote-34) While the real estate market is in a good place around the world, homeowners are finding that the price of home ownership is increasing while wages tend not to grow to meet that demand.[[36]](#footnote-35) This effect has also been exacerbated by the large number of displaced people who are also looking for shelter in a new Member State.[[37]](#footnote-36)

Renting is another housing option for people who are not yet ready to buy homes. While renting is beneficial to people building the financial stability to buy a home the renting market has experienced a spike in recent years.[[38]](#footnote-37) The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in 2023 deliberated on the passing of the Renter’s Reform Bill which would give renters more rights. While this legislation is a step in the direction of providing stability to those renting, the discussion of this bill caused landlords to take preemptive action and start evicting people before laws are passed.[[39]](#footnote-38)

The effects of homelessness are very evident. Based on a study done by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), people experienciong homelessness are more likely to struggle with mental illness, violence, and a higher rate of mortality among other health issues.[[40]](#footnote-39) The lack of a safe and secure place to live also causes the homeless to face the brunt of environmental issues such as weather, pollution, and poor sanitation.[[41]](#footnote-40) Many cities around the globe have hostile architecture, which refers to the practice that some cities are designed to dissuade certain people from being in the area.[[42]](#footnote-41) An example of hostile architecture is boulders beneath bridges that prevent people from using them as shelter. Hostile architecture primarily affects those experiencing homelessness, further adding to their troubles.[[43]](#footnote-42)

***Actions Taken by the UN***

In 1978 the UN General Assembly mandated the establishment of UN-Habitat, an organization to address issues accompanying urban growth.[[44]](#footnote-43) Urban development tends to increase waste production, so UN-Habitat works to build greener cities during urbanization.[[45]](#footnote-44) UN-Habitat also provides first-in-class research about all parts of urban development.[[46]](#footnote-45) UN-Habitat also encourages slum development so that people who live there can also enjoy the benefits of urbanization.[[47]](#footnote-46)

 On December 16th, 2021 at the 76th session of the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 76/133.[[48]](#footnote-47) In this resolution, the assembly reaffirmed its commitment to addressing homelessness. They recognized that leaving people in a state of homelessness violated their human dignity.[[49]](#footnote-48) The resolution also pushed for Member States to consider homeless people in their policies, by providing effective, sustainable, and stable housing for these people to have access to their right to an adequate state of living.[[50]](#footnote-49)

 The UNHRC has laid out the requirements for adequate housing.[[51]](#footnote-50) The requirements for adequate include: four walls, security from evictions, the space should be able to be a space to perform everyday livelihood activities, among others.[[52]](#footnote-51) To meet the requirements of each community not only will each Member State need its solution but each community will need to step up to assist those who wish to address the issue of access to adequate housing.[[53]](#footnote-52)

***Conclusion***

While recessions are not the only form of economic hardship a Member State can face, time and again the effects of having market-based housing often leave people without shelter. Housing is not just an issue that those without homes face, it is an issue for anyone in hard times. If left undisturbed the housing market leaves many people struggling and without shelter. Access to shelter is essential for human dignity, shelter provides security, privacy, and stability.

***Committee Directive***

Delegates should look to collaborate to create resolutions that will address the issue of housing in a time of high housing costs. Delegates should answer questions in their Position Paper like: How can Member States support those experiencing homelessness? How should the international community deal with the constant human rights violations that are happening around the world? What frameworks or initiatives can be applied to Member States to assist in their housing crises? Should the HRC frame housing challenges differently? Delegates should not only target people without homes or those living in slums but should also consider those experiencing general housing insecurity. Member States should be mindful of each Member State’s right to self-governance and sovereignty. While great shifts in economic policies could be beneficial to addressing the issue of housing the HRC does not have the power to legislate on such issues.

1. **Discussing the Difficulty of the Provision and Distribution of International Aid Within Conflict Zones**

***Introduction***

The UN is committed to providing aid to people in Member States that are experiencing conflict. In the world’s current state, it is crucial that internally displaced people (IDPs), refugees, and migrants who are denied refugee status are cared for and given the help they need. IDPs are individuals who have been forced to leave their homes due to conflict or disaster but remain inside the borders of their home country.[[54]](#footnote-53) Throughout the world, there are approximately 68.3 million IDPs.[[55]](#footnote-54) The UN provides approximately 90 million people with humanitarian aid and provides vaccines for 45 percent of children around the world, many of whom are living in conflict zones.[[56]](#footnote-55) The denial of access to humanitarian aid is increasing at a startling rate as we are projected to see a large increase in verified instances of prevention of aid delivery from 2022.[[57]](#footnote-56) Additionally, the number of aid workers who were killed, injured, or kidnapped is increasing each year,[[58]](#footnote-57) In 2023 a new record was set for aid worker deaths.[[59]](#footnote-58) These violations of the protection of humanitarian workers and the movement of humanitarian aid are violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL).[[60]](#footnote-59) Ensuring that aid workers are protected, that humanitarian aid can be provided to those in need, and that IHL is followed is of vital importance to prevent needless civilian deaths in conflict zones and to promote human rights around the world.

***History***

After World War II, Europe lay in ruins. Not only did the continent suffer from the loss of up to 20 million people, with at least 60 million more having been displaced from their homes, but much of Europe’s most critical infrastructure had been destroyed. With cities annihilated, the countryside charred, and roads and transportation systems laid to waste,[[61]](#footnote-60) the UN dedicated itself to the reconstruction of postwar Europe. One major UN committee that aided post-war Europe was the UN Commission on Human Rights, or UNCHR for short. The UNCHR formed the UDHR,[[62]](#footnote-61) the “barbarous acts which [...] outraged the conscience of mankind”.[[63]](#footnote-62) As a direct result of the UDHR, there have been remarkable strides in gender equality, education, and health,[[64]](#footnote-63) as we continue to provide adequate food, housing, and rights for everyone around the globe.

Although the UN exerts great effort to ensure communities are provided the care that they need, there have been times in which aid has been difficult to provide. For example, during the Nigerian Civil War, the United Nations Security Council had pledged non-interventionism and “turned a blind eye to the swift takeover of the Biafran enclave”,[[65]](#footnote-64) leaving only organizations with little power, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), to provide crucial relief for affected persons. These organizations providing relief often were met with political backlash, with operations providing aid being viewed as actions intervening with Nigerian sovereignty.[[66]](#footnote-65) Another notable instance in which humanitarian aid was difficult to access for those in conflict zones was the Rwandan Genocide in 1994. The support provided by the UN and other Member States was met with reluctance due to outcomes in Somalia the previous year,[[67]](#footnote-66) and hostility that led to many countries revoking aid, or keeping their support minimal. Aggressive escalations of the situation prompted multiple Member States to withdraw troops from the peacekeeping unit, reducing the force numbers of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda, or UNAMIR, from 2,165 to 270.[[68]](#footnote-67) The World Food Programme (WFP) was tasked with distributing food from existing WFP storehouses, but many of these storehouses were unreachable due to hostile forces.[[69]](#footnote-68)

With this tragedy and others in mind, groups have urged the UN to devote greater commitment to overcoming new obstacles. One of the main issues the UN faced was a lack of certainty within Member States, leading to hasty withdrawal. In just 10 years alone, from 2004 and 2014, the cost of humanitarian assistance rose by over 600 percent due to violent conflicts[[70]](#footnote-69). Even with large donor support, we lacked ample resources to assist IDPs and other individuals within conflict zones.[[71]](#footnote-70) The UN continues to find ways to address issues that impede the distribution of aid.

***Current Situation***

In 2022 the UN documented 3,931 verified cases of denial of humanitarian access, most of which were by government forces in occupied Palestinian territory, Yemen, Afghanistan, and Mali.[[72]](#footnote-71) In Ukraine, from July to August 2024, 16 incidents involving violence against humanitarian workers were reported near the frontlines.[[73]](#footnote-72) Additionally, the world’s worst child displacement crisis is ongoing in Sudan and aid is still being blocked there.[[74]](#footnote-73) Furthermore, conflict in both Myanmar and Haiti is hindering access to critical assistance that could save lives.[[75]](#footnote-74) The impact of the violence faced in conflict zones will last long after the conflicts end, as it will leave both physical and mental scars on adults and children suffering through them.[[76]](#footnote-75) Likewise, the continued delivery of humanitarian aid after a conflict's end is necessary to the recovery of the people and the healing of the aforementioned scars. Continually, the children living in conflict zones are missing out on the education that they would otherwise be receiving, further setting back the people affected by conflict.[[77]](#footnote-76) Aid programs can deliver some of the supplies needed to help educate children and medical supplies to keep people healthy, but that isn’t possible when aid is being blocked.
 When aid was first being let into Gaza after the October 7th attack in Israel it required governmental approval, slowing and limiting the aid able to reach people.[[78]](#footnote-77) Since then, Israel has passed laws that may prevent the United Nations Relief and Works Agency from operating in Palestine.[[79]](#footnote-78) The crossings from Egypt into Gaza, Rafah and Kerem Shalom/Karem Abu Salem, are the most effective way to deliver aid to Gaza.[[80]](#footnote-79) But these crossings have been shut down and reopened for periods of time, limiting the international community’s ability to supply aid.[[81]](#footnote-80) Other methods of delivering aid into Gaza have been attempted, such as the aid pier installed by the United States that was closed shortly after due to the relative cost and poor weather conditions that limited its usefulness.[[82]](#footnote-81) The U.S. Air Force has also been airdropping humanitarian aid into Gaza in the form of food and water.[[83]](#footnote-82) Additionally, the Humanitarian Air Bridge is an operation the EU has been running to transport over 3,400 tons of cargo to Palestine.[[84]](#footnote-83) Furthermore, Middle Eastern allies are sending the most aid to the Palestinian people, with the United Arab Emirates sending 27 percent of aid, Türkiye sending 19 percent, Saudi Arabia with 18 percent, and Qatar giving eight percent of all aid received.[[85]](#footnote-84)

Sudan has experienced conflict since it gained independence, and its most recent conflict started on April 15th, 2023 when rival groups started fighting for power.[[86]](#footnote-85) Since the conflict broke out 15,000 people have been killed and nearly 8.2 million have been displaced.[[87]](#footnote-86) Humanitarian aid trucks belonging to the UN International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) have been seized by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), preventing the aid from helping its intended targets.[[88]](#footnote-87) Even prior to the conflict, aid reaching its intended target has been a problem in Sudan. In 2019, Saudi Arabia sent food to the Darfur region of Sudan, but this food never reached some of its destinations.[[89]](#footnote-88) Instead, military officers stopped the loading of food goods to be shipped.[[90]](#footnote-89)Additionally, the RSF has used asymmetrical warfare and scorched earth techniques, further increasing the damage caused to civilians and increasing the difficulty of aid delivery.[[91]](#footnote-90) Since this conflict began, over 10.2 million people have been displaced.[[92]](#footnote-91) Approximately 7.9 million are internally displaced within Sudan and at least 2.1 million who have fled to neighboring Member States.[[93]](#footnote-92)

***Actions Taken by the UN***

The UN works to be able to provide aid in any environment, regardless of the level of infrastructure. In 2016, UNICEF implemented the first ever humanitarian drone corridor, which is an area in which drone technologies are used to deliver aid, in Malawi and in 2018 launched one in Vanuatu.[[94]](#footnote-93) Malawi was affected by floods which stopped aid from reaching communities, so drone corridors could be used to bring medical and education supplies to isolated communities.[[95]](#footnote-94) In Vanuatu, UNICEF worked with the local aviation authorities to continue testing this technology to implement it in other Member States and bring about serious changes in health and quality of life experienced.[[96]](#footnote-95) Further, the World Food Program (WFP) has argued that drones would be most effective when infrastructure is damaged, when transporting microbiological samples, for delivering health related items with unpredictable demand, and in supporting vaccination campaigns.[[97]](#footnote-96) This is due to drones' lack of need for expansive infrastructure, their relatively low cost, and their ability to be deployed quickly.

The HRC has also mandated investigative bodies to look at potential human rights violations taking place in Member States.[[98]](#footnote-97) There are currently ongoing investigations all over the world.[[99]](#footnote-98) Once finished, these investigations will give the UN the information necessary to mitigate modern human rights violations.[[100]](#footnote-99) The investigations can also help bring perpetrators to justice, and inform what structural reforms need to be made to prevent conflict from recurring.[[101]](#footnote-100) Such investigative bodies can improve the efficacy of international aid programs in that State to ensure the aid is received by those in need.

The UN has created different frameworks to achieve goals like sustainability, reduction of inequality, and good health. Perhaps the most notable one is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which provides for basic social, political, economic, cultural, and civil rights for all people.[[102]](#footnote-101) The UDHR along with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its optional protocols, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights forms the International Bill of Human Rights.[[103]](#footnote-102) Many of the rights covered in the International Bill of Human Rights are not being afforded to those who are also being denied access to aid. The HRC also utilizes its “Special Procedures,” mechanisms allowing independent experts to conduct research and advocacy around regional or thematic issues such as the right to food.[[104]](#footnote-103) Additionally, the HRC has a complaint procedure in which any individual, group of individuals, or non-governmental organization can submit a complaint of violation of human rights by a Member State.[[105]](#footnote-104) These mechanisms should be looked at or utilized when trying to ease the difficulties associated with humanitarian aid delivery.

***Conclusion***

 The HRC has done much for human rights but struggles to ensure that international aid can be given freely during conflict. Although the UN, and many other organizations like the red cross and amnesty international, provide more than 90 million people with humanitarian assistance,[[106]](#footnote-105) There are more than 300 million people still in need of humanitarian assistance.[[107]](#footnote-106) Member States that experience conflict are generally set back in their development, but medical and educational aid can mitigate the effects that conflict can have on the future of a Member State. The UN’s usage and development of drone technology in regard to aid delivery has shown that issues regarding infrastructure can be overcome.[[108]](#footnote-107) But, more work must be done since the denial of humanitarian aid by governments and non-state actors is still a troubling issue

***Committee Directive***

The HRC asks that Member States cover the complex issues that are preventing innocent civilians from receiving life-saving aid. Delegates should address failures and successes in delivering aid as well as the factors that contributed to these outcomes. Questions to consider include: How can aid best be provided to areas with little or no infrastructure? What methods can Member States use to provide aid to the citizens of other Member States without disrespecting their sovereignty? How can Member States work together to better protect humanitarian aid workers? How can the UN work to address the root causes of aid prevention in conflict zones? How can Member States work to increase usage and development of technologies that make aid delivery easier? Delegates should focus on adding to established legislation, programs, or initiatives.

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