Committee Overview

a. Introduction

The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations which meets at the UN Office at Geneva. The council is composed of 47 States which are responsible for the establishment and protection of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights around the globe and in their nations. The council has permission to discuss all issues related to human rights throughout the year. The Human Rights Council was created in the United Nations General Assembly on March 15, 2006, under a request of resolution number 60/251. Its first session was held on June 19-30 in 2006. The council counts with the Universal Periodic Review mechanism which assesses the situations in all the UN member states, the Advisory Committee which brainstorms advice on human rights issues and the Complaint Procedure which works with individuals and organizations to bring attention to human rights violations. Finally, the council also works with the UN Special Procedures, a group made up of experts on monitoring, analyzing and reporting human rights situations in specific nations.

b. Membership and voting

The Human Rights Council is made of 47 member states. The members are elected by the General Assembly of the UN by direct and secret ballot. Members of the council serve for a three year period and may not be immediately re-elected after two consecutive terms. The membership is based on equal geographic distribution and is distributed as:

1. African States: 13 seats
2. Asia-Pacific States: 13 seats
3. Latin American and Caribbean States: 8 seats

4. Western European and other States: 7 seats
5. Eastern European States: 6 seats

Members of the Human Rights Council must uphold high human rights standards as insisted by the States that adopted resolution number 60/251 when creating the council in 2006.

The members from 2006 to 2019 include the following states: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Republic of North Macedonia, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zambia.

For the Bureau of the council, five people are elected to serve for a year, this includes one president and four vice-presidents who represent the five regional groups.

c. Mandate and powers

As the Human Rights Council's main purpose is to promote and protect human rights in the member states, they can issue resolutions with the purpose of calling certain States to create mechanisms in order to monitor concerning situations, as well as they can call upon the State to take certain actions to assure that human rights are being respected. It has the responsibility to improve the mandate of "special procedures" that prioritize specific countries with serious human rights problems. Inside the special procedures, the committee is authorized to create advisory committees, complaint procedures, fact-finding missions and commissions of inquiries. It is especially in charge of auspicing the Universal Periodic Review, which evaluates the human rights records of every UN member state while being a State-driven process. Within the HRC, there are numerous forums that focus on specific topics, such as the forum on minority issues, business and human rights, social, and democracy and finally, the expert mechanism on the rights of indigenous people.

d. Conclusion

The Human Rights Council does exactly what its name suggests and specializes in making sure that every person on the planet has rights and that countries respects them. It works with the countries to correct mistakes that have been made in order to reach a point where society takes a stand for justice and equality among all citizens. It is in charge of making sure that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is being followed and no one attempts against its status.

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Topics of the Committee

Ways to ensure the rights of disabled people around the world

a. Background of the conflict

The topic of ensuring the rights of disabled people around the world focuses on providing all human rights to citizens who are discriminated against and stripped of certain possibilities due to their differences. The history of disabled people goes back to the creation of human mutations but the committee will focus on the story of disability since the early 20 century. In 1930 multiple public figures backed up the idea of Eugenics. Eugenics supported the belief that people with disabilities were a threat to the health of a nation. Eugenics strived to eliminate physical and mental disabilities so societies could grow healthy. Disabled people would be deliberately segregated to "perfect" the environment. The attitude changed towards disability after World War I when disabled soldiers returned from the battlefronts of war. Many people felt strongly about veterans because of their sacrifice towards their nations. Society adapted to meet the needs of the disabled like major advances in prosthetics, medical treatment, employers offered jobs to disabled workers and

new housing was built to meet the necessities of physically disabled members. Even if there were some advancements the situation was still rough healthcare wise. Many disabled children faced poverty and their families could not afford special equipment; additionally, there were no vaccines to treat the diseases. Education wise, everyone has the right to education but special institutions were made to adapt to the needs. Even with education most people with disabilities would never find a job. Life changed for people with disabilities with the start of World War II because the labor force focused on the recruitment of "unfit" workers. With the return of soldiers from the war, people reviled mistreatment towards disabled people.

b. Conflict development and response

In 1944 the institution of the Disability Employment Act assured that disabled people were going to be guaranteed employment quotas and reserved occupations. Furthermore, the act established the National Health Service to extend rehabilitation to service workers that were disabled due to industrial incidents. With all of the changes came a promise to restore the mobility and living skills of disabled citizens so they could be reintroduced to society. The development of the conflict was in the hands of the disabled citizens themselves. Many disabilities charities formed in the second half of the 20th century and movements like the "Silent Approach" were instituted to protest against discrimination based on disabilities. But even if the situation is improving for people with disabilities, there is not absolute respect for their rights. Worldwide one billion individuals have a disability. Many people with disabilities live in conflict settings or in developing countries, where they experience a range of barriers to education, health care, and other basic services. In many countries, they are subjected to violence and discrimination. People with disabilities are also often deprived of their right to live independently, as many are locked up in institutions, shackled, or cycled through the criminal justice system. Many of these human rights abuses are a result of entrenched stigma and a lack of community-based services essential to ensuring their rights, including under the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

c. International Framework: Role of the United Nations

The United Nations created the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on December 13 of 2006 in the UN New York headquarters. The convention has 180 ratifications and 162 signatories. It is the fastest negotiated human rights treaty in the history o the UN; it was

negotiated in eight sessions of the Un General Assembly from 2002 to 2006. According to the official website of the UN:

> The Convention follows decades of work by the United Nations to change attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. It takes to a new height the movement from viewing persons with disabilities as "objects" of charity, medical treatment and social protection towards viewing persons with disabilities as "subjects" with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent as well as being active members of society.

> The Convention is intended as a human rights instrument with an explicit, social development dimension. It adopts a broad categorization of persons with disabilities and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It clarifies and qualifies how all categories of rights apply to persons with disabilities and identifies areas where adaptations have to be made for persons with disabilities to effectively exercise their rights and areas where their rights have been violated, and where protection of rights must be reinforced (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Disability).

To find out more about the UN efforts relating people with disabilities access the following articles:

1. [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)](#)
2. [Human rights of persons with disabilities](#)
3. [History of United Nations and Persons with Disabilities – The first millennium decade](#)

d. Future Challenges of the Conflict

If the conflict does not resolve it would only decrease the growth of societies in multiple aspects. Countries would not be able to accomplish the 17 SDGs since SDG #10 specifies the reduction of inequalities. Furthermore, economic growth could not be achieved because the labor force of countries would not be as productive as they could be because it would exclude the majority of people with some kind of disabilities. It is in the best interest of nations to implement the rights of disabled people since they are valuable members of society that can bring innovation and entrepreneurship to society if they are given the necessary resources to grow.

e. Conclusion

In conclusion, the history of disabled people and their societies has been tumultuous; people with disabilities have experienced hard times since the beginning and they continue to lack their basic rights in many countries that are part of the United Nations. It is the duty of the United Nations Human Rights Council to protect all individuals of society and make sure that every person is given the full resources they need for an enjoyable and high quality of life. Society has come a long way in terms of acceptance in the ambit of disabilities but that does not mean that there is no room for improvement. Until all of the Universal Rights are not implemented by the members of the organization, the council must keep meeting to find solutions that fit every nation and consider all individuals.

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Mechanisms to eradicate institutional racism

a. Background of the conflict

Institutional racism consists of discriminatory practices within institutions. This type of racism can be distinguished due to the attitude and racial bias in the creation and institution of policies, laws, and practices that create unequal access to goods and services based on race. This type of racism creates racial gaps across every system. Some examples of institutional racism include the quality of education children receive, the income of families, the exposure to pollutants, the quality of food families have access to, etc… Furthermore, it could also affect access to basic needs like clean water and health care. Additionally, institutional racism affects the types of interactions that members of society have with the criminal justice system. The difference with racism enforced by individuals is that institutional racism affects a whole racial group instead of targeting a single person.

b. Conflict development and response

The term institutional racism was first utilized in 1967 by authors Charles V. Hamilton and Kwame Ture in the book "Black Power: The Politics of Liberation" which spoke about the core of racism. It could be argued that institutional racism started with the slavery of races since the government deliberately restricted the access of resources to slaves. Slaves lacked the entirety of rights that other races had and did not have the same freedom as others. This was the start of this type of racism because policies, laws, and practices of former governments created inequality in every system. Even after the abolishment of forced labor and the creation of movements like the civil rights one, the imprint of slavery on race relations with the law is the greatest cause of the gap between institution and individual. In the modern world one of the biggest examples of institutional racism racial profiling by the criminal justice system. As a response, movements like Black Lives Matters have been created to fight institutional racism coming from the police in the United States. Black Live Matters, as well as other movements of similar nature, look

to educate and call attention to the issue while they seek to bring justice to the discriminated community. Lastly, organizations like the United Nations are engaging in discussions with political leaders to eliminate racism in each individual nation.

c. International Framework: Role of the United Nations

As previously mentioned, the Human Rights Council of the United Nations is engaging in conversations with country representatives to fix the long embedded issue institutional racism in countries like the U.K or Germany. The Geneva-based Human Rights Council has appointed experts to report back on the countries' situations; furthermore, Special rapporteurs are personally invited by the governments to access the situation and collaborate in working groups focused on minority issues. To access specific cases enter the links below:

1. [UN rights experts voice concerns about 'structural racism' in United Kingdom](#)

2. [Germany racial profiling: UN experts highlight situation of people of African descent](#)

3. [UN human rights experts says deaths in custody reinforce concerns about 'structural racism' in UK](#)

4. [Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance](#)

d. Future Challenges of the Conflict

If institutional racism is not resolved it could lead to resentment between races making nations weaker and even causing civil wars. All members of society are valuable citizens that can contribute to the nation in several ways, but when they are not allowed to grow by their own state this could turn to political instability in a country. Violent riots and revolts could break out in

the search for equality and civil wars would grow to terrorize countries in which different races resent each other. Furthermore, there is no way for a country to reach its fullest potential if not all participants of the economy are fully capable of contributing. Institutional racism must end in order to create equality for all from the core of a country: a government that represents the people that it serves.

e. Conclusion

In conclusion, institutional racism is incredibly detrimental to society since it is a form of discrimination that is enforced by the laws/ policies of the government and systems of a country. Institutional racism is embedded in the system and has been for a long time but it is time for it to be eliminated. The growth of society depends on the contribution of every individual, but if some of those participants are not contributing to their full potential because the government does not allow them to there is no possible way to develop. Furthermore, racism creates social inequality and resentment. A country is stronger when the majority of its individuals are on the same level in front of the law but when there is racism the country turns weak because not everyone is in favor to work with each other. In order to advance as societies, nations must strive to equalize their systems so discrimination is eliminated.

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The prevention of violence during elections in Africa

a. Background of the conflict

In Africa, politics are mainly based o. a "Big Man" political system. When the resources are centered at the power of only one man, the stakes of elections increase because the winner takes it all. The other candidates who lose, are left in a miserable position that makes society frown upon them, so it is in their best interest to do whatever it takes in order to win the power. This has caused electoral competition to be even bigger, often leading to extreme electoral-based violence, for example, these types of violent acts are often more visible when candidates propose constitutional changes once they win, in

order to extend their presidential terms (Burkina Faso 2014). International headlines mainly don't talk about the topic, because only a few cases are big enough to make it "worthwhile", however, local elections that don't take place in big or important cities are overlooked while the inhabitants suffer from terror in their own streets, many times long before election day.

b. Conflict development and response

Normally, the notable violence in order to maintain ground to gain more and more followers starts on intra-party tensions, which attacks individuals inside the Party that is already in power, or others that are gaining popularity. In Burundi (2015), protests took place outside of an opposition radio station that was known for criticizing the government. The protestors were part of the party's youth militia and they popped balloons in order to mock gunshot sounds. Taking into consideration the 390 elections that have taken place between 1990 and 2012, 132 elections suffered from pre-election violence between citizens, while 91 suffered from post-election violence due to the outcomes. Scholars all over the world have studied the source of said bursts of social conflicts, while in other countries with more judicial independence experience lower levels of violence, such as Botswana, Ghana and Namibia.

c. International Framework: Role of the United Nations

The UNDP declared that normally those elections that are more transparent, fair and free are less propense to suffer from electoral violence than those that are subjects of allegated fraud and deliberate cheating. However, a 15 year study in African elections show that these statements are simply not true in the countries that are constantly suffering from terrorism due to the election process. The Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights manages the West African Regional Office (WARO), whose main task is "identify best practices which have proved to work for the promotion and protection of human rights in the electoral context of West African States" (OHCHR WARO). For more information on the UN's actions and other organizations within African countries, visit the following articles:

1. WARO electoral processes booklet
2. African Commission of Human and People's Rights: Guidelines for electoral observations and monitoring missions
3. Violence in Kenya's presidential election: OHCHR

d. Future Challenges of the Conflict

With the increasing electoral violence in African elections, the democracy in the various countries is in danger of extinction, due to the fact that people are doubting the ability of democracy to solve different social and political

conflicts in society. It has also even been used as a justification of military intervention against the people, violating numerous human rights. The fact that parties can opt for violence in order to win the sympathization of more and more voters, who are free to choose whichever candidate they think will represent their interests best. When violence is used against those who are not supporters of a certain ideology, that creates an oppression within citizens and denies the right of freedom of thought. Totalitarian governments have more opportunity to take over the countries and danger in liberties.

e. Conclusion

The Human Rights Council has the power to work with other organizations such as the UNDP and WARO to reach agreements in order to decrease the amount of violence present in pre and post election violence that attempts against the freedom of choice and democracy in various countries. As long as real democracy is not respected across the continent, and Big Man politics are still implemented, the risk of a totalitarian government will rise even more and the human rights will be even more violated because of violence that comes either from the military and governmenn forces, or from rebel groups who are supporting a certain party or candidate.

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Ways to prevent the trafficking of children, torture and any other form

of maltreatment

a. Background of the conflict

Child trafficking refers to the process of involuntarily recruiting children and exploiting them in anyway that attempts against their safety and overall well being. The ILO claims it is a form of slavery or modern practices that become slavery, since the kids are particularly at risk for being preys of sexual exploitation, domestic labour and even drug couriering. Many times, the places that they are forced to work in are in deplorable conditions, since they are used as a form of cheaper labour and thanks to that they can't explore their full potential at achieving great things because of the lack of education and support they receive. In conflicts, such as natural disasters and/or humanitarian emergencies, traffickers take advantage of the state of innocence and vulnerability that the kids are in, and they make sure to tear them away from their families through false promises or by force. The approximate number of children trafficked around the world is of 5.5 million, according to the ILO, with them being constant subjects of both physical and mental abuse. Child labour is also another pressing issue when it comes to the freedom of children, with almost 152 million children being used for labour worldwide, accoridng to UNICEF. It is the product of many factors such as poverty, lack of jobs or education, and social norms that don't favor their background. There is a World Day Against Child Labour that is celebrated on June 12, as a protest against the deprivation of right to this children, such as education and an enjoyable childhood.

b. Conflict development and response

The constant exploitation to children under the age of 18 leads to a worldwide conflict that affects the overall well being of the world. Normally, this is caused because of overall poverty in countries, since many children who are surveyed as to why they are working answer because it is a way of supplementing their family average income, in order for them to have basic needs covered. Another main cause are cultural values, since in many parts of the world children are seen as assets to bring money and progress in time of poverty, so they must gain skills in order to begin producing. However, this is not something that must be achieved through force or at such a young age, but rather accordingly to their growth and evolution as human beings.

c. International Framework: Role of the United Nations

The UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking works with organizations such as UNICEF and the ILO in order to achieve a fair world where freedom exists and to abolish the existence of this modern forms of slavery. The ILO constantly holds conventions in which ways to reduce the

rates of child labor and trafficking are discussed, and they come up with specific recommendations on how countries can implement certain policies to prevent this. IPEC (International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour) was created by IL with the sole purpose of progressively eliminating child labour on international grounds. On the other hand, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) have created initiatives and action programs by which they focus on the erradication of children and human trafficking in general.

1. [More funding needed to tackle child labour in agriculture says UN, marking World Day](#)
2. [ILO's conventions and recommendations](#)
3. [IPEC's purpose and information](#)
4. [UNODC initiatives](#)

d. Future Challenges of the Conflict

Whether kids are working willingly or forcefully, they are not supposed to be working and maintaining a whole family when they should be developing slowly and enjoying their childhood. As the international community develops, more and more people are born while jobs become more scarce, making poverty increase. This would directly affect the economy of countries and those of families around the world, making more people die of hunger or because of poor living conditions. Trafficking on the other hand would lead to an increase in the death rate of children around the world and to more violations to the human rights of both families and their kids.

e. Conclusion

In conclusion, children are being tortured in every way and form, many of these directly violate their rights of freedom and happiness. The most vulnerable are normally the most propense to experiencing this kind of torture, such as being forced to work at a young age and even their selling for inhumane reasons, such as sex exploitation and drug coureiring. The United Nations is working with many organizations to create a strong front against these violations to the lives of innocent children, since this creates a more unfair society against those who only have the best interest at heart.

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