Princeton Model United Nations Conference 2017

SOCHUM
Chair: Alis Yoo
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LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear delegates,

Welcome to PMUNC 2017! My name is Alis Yoo, and I will be the chair of SOCHUM this year. Just a little about me: I’m from Palisades Park, New Jersey. I'm a junior in the History department, focusing on contemporary U.S. history. I’m the Vice President of the International Relations Council, the umbrella organization that oversees all things Model UN at Princeton, including PMUNC. I’m also the President of the Asian American Students Association, Princeton’s only political AAPI organization. This is my fourth year with PMUNC; I was a delegate in UNHRC my senior year of high school and have been staffing since I entered college.

With that in mind, I know what it’s like to be a delegate at PMUNC. It’s a competitive conference, especially in the General Assembly committees, and it can be daunting for someone who’s still learning the ropes of Model UN. I hope that everyone will keep that in mind and contribute to positive, collaborative discussion. Good diplomacy, not aggression, will be rewarded. I want this to be a learning experience first, a time for you to learn about the intricacies of international political matters, but also about how to act as a leader among your peers. I’m looking forward to hearing the ideas you put forward and the discussion you generate. Though the topics appear at first glance to be solely a matter of organizing humanitarian aid logistics and minimizing the drug trade, solutions must take into account a mix of complex national and global politics, uncooperative and sometimes antagonistic non-state actors, and even seemingly uncontrollable factors like natural disasters.

Topic A, food insecurity in East Africa and Yemen, will require for you to navigate through countries that are wracked by war, drought, and disease. The causes for food insecurity are not abstract enemies like ‘cholera’ or ‘lack of food’ that the entire world community can rally around; famines are manmade, and most of these wars involve the arms, intelligence, and military might of global powers far away from the East African region. You are tasked with working through divisive politics to devise a sustainable and effective end to food insecurity.

Topic B, the Central American Drug conflict, will require you to gain an understanding of the relationship between corruption, crime, geographic location, and power dynamics in Latin America and specifically in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. The Central American drug conflict is devastatingly complex and intensely costly. You are tasked with determining how to minimize the drug trade in Central America and introduce effective agencies to combat corruption in the region.

If I could offer you some advice before the conference, remember to practice speaking as much as your research. A confident opening speech that mentions an innovative idea with minimal use of reference will help you immensely with developing a bloc and your own leadership skills. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. I look forward to meeting you in November!

Sincerely,
Alis
TOPIC A: Food Insecurity in Eastern Africa and Yemen

Introduction

Since at least early 2017, Eastern Africa and Yemen are facing the largest and most complex humanitarian crisis of the 21st century. Famine has been officially declared in parts of South Sudan, while Somalia, Nigeria, and Yemen are categorized as ‘emergencies’, just one step below the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification’s (IPC) definition of famine. Additionally, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 7.7 million people are facing acute hunger due to “prolonged conflict in the Kasaï and Tanganyika regions” and exacerbated by army worm, measles, and cholera. Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and other neighboring countries feel the strain of supporting hundreds of thousands of displaced persons as they too grapple with hunger, livestock death, and prolonged drought. The situation seems dire as the affected countries are entering the lean season, when food supplies are at their lowest.

Though drought plays a significant role in food insecurity, these crises are manmade, a result of war and parties in the conflict directly preventing aid and infrastructure construction to starve their enemy. In Yemen, where a civil war rages between the Houthi rebel movement and Saudi-led coalition backing exiled President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, a Saudi-imposed naval embargo and the destruction of nine out of ten of Yemen’s ports have severely reduced imports and aid access since 2015. The hunger crisis is compounded by the fact that Yemen imports 90% of its staple foods. That being said, the major cause of death in times of famine is not just hunger, but lack of access to potable water and densely populated areas like cities or displaced persons’ camps that inevitably become hubs for poor hygiene and disease. Referring to the 2011 famine in Somalia, UNICEF water, sanitation, and hygiene specialist Ann Thomas said “we underestimated the role of water and its contribution to mortality in the last famine. It gets overshadowed by the food.”
Resolving the issue is as much a political maneuver as a logistical one: delegates must work with governments at war who are starving out civilians along with enemies and who may force out aid workers if the international community is too aggressive. With the current level of international cooperation, widespread famine is imminent and millions more will die of starvation, disease, and political violence. SOCHUM will be tasked with addressing the immediate needs of the affected countries: adequate funding, water and sanitation infrastructure, protecting civilian infrastructure, and eliminating political barriers to aid provision. To prevent other manmade and climate-based hunger crises like these in the future, delegates will also consider means to combat the effects of climate change on food security, to build medical and transportation infrastructure in war-torn countries, to enforce a more effective crisis response system on the international community, and most importantly to create a stable political environment that would not sacrifice civilians for military gain. As put by UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O’Brien, “only a political solution will ultimately end human suffering and bring stability to the region” and humanitarian aid, while necessary, is “not the long-term solution to the growing crisis.”

History of the Topic

Though great thinkers like Thomas Malthus and Paul Ehrlich have predicted that population growth would inevitably lead to catastrophic resource depletion and famine, the reality has always been more disheartening. Famine is primarily manmade, either caused by humans as a tool or consequence of political conflict and exacerbated by inaction. Professor Cormac Ó Gráda demonstrates in “Famine: A Short History” that “famine often travels in war's wake, either as an instrument of war or as a result of a wartime reallocation of resources. Conversely, he points out, the most dramatic famines of the modern era also result from peacetime policies that favor rapid industrialization over agricultural production, with deadly results.” The number of famine victims
has only recently decreased; the 20th century is marked by a ludicrous number of mass famines, caused by World War II and the Great Leap Forward, affecting tens of millions of people at a time. Fortunately, the number of deaths as a result of famine have dropped steadily since the early 20th century.

Having established that famine follows political conflict, it makes sense that the famines of the 20th century mainly occurred in Eastern Europe and Asia, while today’s famines, though smaller in scale and mortality, take place in conflict-riddled countries like Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen. It has only been six years since Somalia suffered a famine that killed up to 260,000 people as a result of the 2011 East Africa drought and Western governments’ refusal to provide aid to civilians in Al-Shabaab territory. As you tackle a regional situation veering on the edge of famine, keep in mind that famines are historically caused and worsened by political machinations.

Current Situation

The United Nations and IPC scale estimate that 20 million people are in phase four emergency regions across Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen, with additional millions facing dire food security in countries like Kenya, Ethiopia, Sudan and Uganda. According to Oxfam, “East Africa, Yemen and north-east Nigeria are in the grip of an unprecedented and devastating food crisis. Famine is already likely happening in parts of northern Nigeria, while Yemen and Somalia are on the brink. Thanks to aid efforts, it has been pushed back in South Sudan but the food crisis continues to spread across the country.”

Nigeria

Though Nigeria is Africa’s most populous country and an emerging energy superpower, the country has fallen victim in recent years to Boko Haram and militants in the Niger Delta. In the northeastern region of Nigeria, 8.5 million people need humanitarian assistance. More than 2 million
are in acute need of food support after fleeing violence caused by Boko Haram, more than half of whom are children. Though Nigeria has received personnel and technical military aid from the United Kingdom and United States, Boko Haram still wreaks havoc in the Lake Chad region, having caused 20,000 deaths, 5 million internal displacements, and a quadrupled increase in child suicide bombers. Nigeria has a pressing food insecurity and refugee crisis that is exacerbated by government corruption and Boko Haram’s hostility towards humanitarian aid. In Nigeria and the other three countries facing famine, “having 10 million children out of school is literally a ticking time bomb for our nation,” according to Nigerian Senate President Bukola Saraki. “An uneducated population will be locked in a cycle of poverty for their entire lives. These children could constitute the next generation of suicide bombers and militant terrorists.” SOCHUM must work with the Nigerian government and perhaps even non-state actors to create a safe environment in the midst of violent terrorism, hunger, and disease outbreak.

Somalia

After two seasons of poor rain in 2016, Somalia’s population suffer from food insecurity that ranges from IPC phase 3, crisis, to phase 4, emergency. Over 6.2 million people, or roughly half of the national population, require humanitarian assistance. Nearly 400,000 children under the age of five are suffering from acute malnourishment and there have been 916,000 internally displaced persons between January and July of 2017 alone. Somalia is particularly impacted by failing rains and environmental fluctuations because 65% of its GDP is derived from the agricultural sector and a significant portion of Somalis make their livelihoods by raising livestock. The nature of Somalia’s short wet and long dry seasons “create a domino effect of losses” in which the country must weather six months of no harvest after a failed harvest.

Sadly, Somalia is familiar with famines, having suffered through three in just the past 43 years. The 1974, 1992, and 2011 famines all developed from severe droughts, but have political
causes as well. The 1992 famine took place as Somalia was engulfed in civil war and 2 million refugees and internally displaced persons were forced from their homes to crowded camps. In 2011, militant Islamist group al-Shabaab prevented international aid from entering regions it occupied, a logistical problem that aid agencies still face today. Each famine killed around 200,000 people, roughly 5% of the total population today.

Somalia’s political strife has been constant and deleterious to famine relief efforts. The country, under the regime of Siad Barre, underwent a grueling civil war in the early 1990s that caused the 1992 famine and for Somalia to disintegrate to a failed state. The federal government organized as a transitional body and gradually took over the south, which radical groups like Al-Shabaab controlled, while parts of the north splintered into autonomous regions. For years, the official government struggled to reclaim territory and control, as pirate attacks reached a seven-year high in 2010 and Al-Shabaab fought vigorously and prevented aid relief in times of famine. Even today, Al-Shabaab purportedly blocks transportation and steals food from relief efforts. The Somalian government has been at war against radical group for eight years, and does not have the resources or capacity to fend off famine. Further intervention from the international community and dialogue with both the government and non-state actors are needed to secure the immunity of famine relief in war.

Somalia’s situation is compounded by infectious diseases. As the drought rages, Somalia’s much of potable water supply dried up, leaving desperate civilians to drink unsafe water or go thirsty, both of which weaken their immune systems. As a result, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), Somalia is suffering outbreaks of cholera, diarrhea, and other diseases. By June, there were more than 71,000 cases of acute diarrhea and cholera in the country. In July, there were a suspected 14,000 measles cases, the worst outbreak in four years. Though the WHO and local non-governmental organizations (NGO) are working to immunize the most vulnerable
civilians, children and infants, food insecurity and lack of potable water are the roots of disease outbreak and must first be eradicated.

Due to the fast-approaching onset of the Jilaal dry season, the hottest and driest time of the year, the food insecurity crisis in Somalia will get worse before it gets better. Delegates must employ, among other considerations, a combination of rapid-fire funding, innovative humanitarian supply distribution, and preparative measures for a better harvest in 2018.

South Sudan

In February 2017, famine was declared in parts of South Sudan, affecting approximately half of the population. Another 1 million South Sudanese are estimated to be in a food security emergency, just one level below famine. South Sudan is the only one of the four countries to have a famine, an indication of a failed situation on the part of the government and the international community.

The famine is yet another manmade crisis, the consequence of a civil war that has been raging since December 2013 and the years of severe disruption to agriculture, livestock-rearing, economy, and daily life. The war began as a squabble between President Salva Kiir and his then-deputy Riek Machar, both prominent figures in the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA), the rebel forces that won the country its independence from Sudan in 2011. President Kiir believed that Machar was plotting a coup d’état, an uncertain claim that has led to four years of civil war, 300,000 dead, 3 million or 25% of the population displaced, and thousands dead by ethnic cleansing. Many of the 1 million who fled South Sudan go to Uganda, which is developing its own food insecurity, though it continues to welcome refugees. During the course of the war, the country has had several lapses into food insecurity, most notably having an IPC phase 3 crisis in 2015. The political tensions and their tangible impact on the South Sudanese cannot be overstated.
South Sudan, though rich in oil, is highly undeveloped. There is virtually no infrastructure or access to running water, both factors that can exacerbate the mortality of a famine and related disease outbreaks drastically. According to the WHO, as of July 2017, “a total of 17,785 cholera cases including 320 (CFR 1.8%) deaths have been reported from 24 counties in South Sudan since the outbreak in June 2016.” This, in conjunction with the transmission of acute watery diarrhea and the lack of basic civilian infrastructure, let alone functioning medical facilities, puts humanitarian workers at a more difficult starting point. SOCHUM must work around the lack of infrastructure and political violence that may destroy any new infrastructure to deprive their enemy of military advantage.

Yemen

Yemen is the poorest country in the Arab world, even before being ravaged by hunger and a civil war that resulted in 48,000 casualties. In November 2011, an uprising backed by the Houthis, a primarily Shia-led political movement, forced authoritarian President Ali Abdullah Saleh out of office, making his deputy Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi the new president. However, Hadi’s presidency has been marred by “attacks by al-Qaeda, a separatist movement in the south, the continuing loyalty of many military officers to Saleh, as well as corruption, unemployment and food insecurity.” In early 2015, the Houthis mended their relationship with former President Saleh and took over the capital Sana’a, forcing Hadi into house arrest.

Since then, a coalition of nine Arab countries led by Saudi Arabia and supported militarily by the United States, the United Kingdom, and France have conducted airstrikes which caused approximately 20% of the 10,000 civilian deaths. A Human Rights Watch (HRW) report documenting the impact of the coalition’s airstrikes on civilian economic infrastructure indicated that between March 2015 and February 2016 196 business structures and 59 civilian economic structures, “including factories, commercial warehouses, a farm, and two power stations,” were
destroyed, often using munitions supplied by the U.S. or U.K. HRW deems these attacks a deliberate attack on civilian objects and thus violation of international humanitarian law, while Saudi Arabia maintained that the coalition has been conducting airstrikes “in a responsible and very cautious manner.” The United Nations condemned the coalition’s actions, stating that “the Yemeni economy is being willfully destroyed . . . [as] parties to the conflict have targeted key economic infrastructure”, resulting in an estimated $19 billion infrastructure damage, roughly half of Yemen’s GDP in 2013.

The destruction of civilian economic infrastructure has deprived Yemenis of their livelihoods and the ability to afford basic needs, which are drastically rising in price due to the coalition’s naval embargo and fighting around port cities like Aden and Hudaydah. The collapse of the Yemeni economy resulted in the government’s failure to provide for social services when their civilians need it most. According to a report by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “in August 2016, the Ministry of Public Health and Population (MOPHP) in Sana’a announced it could no longer cover operational costs for health services.” Worse yet, the Yemeni government, backed by the coalition, and the rebel forces are deliberately preventing humanitarian aid from entering the country, as it may fall into their opponents’ hands.

As a direct result of the civil war, of the 27 million people in Yemen, 17 million are food insecure, 6.8 million are severely food insecure, and 14.4 million do not have access to clean water and sanitation. Mortality is further compounded as only 45% of Yemen’s 3,500 hospitals are fully functional and 2 million Yemenis are internally displaced while hundreds of thousands flee the country, conditions that can cause food insecurity and disease to spread to urban areas and neighboring countries. Weak rule of law, constant bloodshed, and infrastructure destruction make it difficult for the international community to properly address the food insecurity emergency, let alone disentangle itself from causing civilian deaths.
Issues to Consider

Sanitation and Disease

Beyond starvation, preventable and/or waterborne diseases—such as cholera, malaria, and measles—are major causes of mortality. According to the Red Cross, cholera outbreaks that started in late 2016 in Yemen, Somalia, and South Sudan have infected nearly a million people. Yemen bears the brunt of the outbreaks, with nearly 600,000 Yemenis infected and 3,000 new cases every day. Elhadj As Sy, the Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, lamented that the cholera outbreaks were diverting resources and labor away from their original cause: widespread food insecurity, drought, and war. Due to millions of people escaping war zones, there is massive population movement towards urban areas or congregation in displaced persons’ camps in neighboring countries, both of which are straining under the lack of supplies and proper civilian infrastructure. As a result, cities and displaced persons’ camps are more dangerous than rural areas, despite the latter’s lack of access to supplies. Densely populated areas tend to lack sanitation and become incubators for disease, especially because malnourished people have compromised immune systems. Low-tech and low-cost supplies like more latrine pits, soap, water-treatment tablets, plastic buckets and mosquito netting can help alleviate the cholera and malaria outbreaks and prevent future cases from occurring. Although immunization is under the purview of the WHO, it is a necessary action in solving this humanitarian crisis.

Humans are not the only ones susceptible to disease and hunger. Animals like goats and cows starve along their owners and suffer from compromised immune systems, becoming vulnerable to preventable diseases. Livestock death is a significant issue, especially in Somalia, where 70% of the livestock have died of disease or starvation. In countries like Somalia, which are heavily dependent on livestock for sustenance and economy, livestock death can become a cyclical problem
exacerbating human starvation. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) has taken steps to combat this problem in Somalia by vaccinating animals.

_**Violent Conflict and Access to Aid**_

Violent conflict has created food insecurity in East Africa and continually hampered its resolution. Besides the above instances of war wreaking death, disease, and famine on civilians, it also predictably harms the humanitarian aid workers attempting to help those civilians. According to the WHO, in Yemen, “at least 274 health facilities had been damaged or destroyed in the conflict. Thirteen health workers have meanwhile been killed and 31 injured” in 2016. Aid workers from international organizations have trouble getting aid to people who need it, as the lack of fuel and damaged infrastructure hinder transportation. People scattered in rural areas are disadvantaged in receiving help. Furthermore, both rebel forces and governments often demand taxes from aid workers who are passing through or steal their supplies. The governments at war with said militants, and other countries like the United States, do not contribute as much as they could to humanitarian relief because they do not want such efforts to go to the wrong place. In the United States, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), prevents aid distribution if there is credible reason to believe it may fall into terrorists’ hands. However, the U.S. has foregone this policy during the 2011 Somalia famine to supply food to territories held by Al-Shabaab.

Delegates must work with governments that have actively hampered aid efforts for political reasons to find a solution that properly addresses the famine while remaining agreeable enough that the receiving country does not force out aid workers altogether. Potential solutions like introducing an arms embargo, sanctions, or even reconstructing civilian infrastructure have been met with backlash in South Sudan and Yemen. It is difficult to ask countries, let alone non-state actors, to stick to the rules of war, given that the UN has no means of enforcement. Discouragement
measures such as cutting aid will only harm innocent civilians who are already caught in the fray of their governments’ political machinations.

Source: UNOCHA

Funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMMEDIATE REQUIREMENTS</th>
<th>REQUIREMENTS RECEIVED</th>
<th>BY COUNTRY</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$4.9 B\textsuperscript{1}</td>
<td>$2.9 B</td>
<td></td>
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\begin{itemize}
    \item **NIGERIA**: $0.73B 76%
    \item **SOUTH SUDAN\textsuperscript{2}**: $1.25B 69%
    \item **SOMALIA\textsuperscript{4}**: $1.21B 52%
    \item **YEMEN**: $1.78B 51%
\end{itemize}

Sources: Financial Tracking Service (FTS). \textsuperscript{1}The $4.9B funding requirement figure reflects compiled data for the four priority clusters (health, food security, nutrition and WASH) in each of the four countries, as tracked by FTS. \textsuperscript{2}Includes flexible, unmarked funding to the HRPs in the four countries. \textsuperscript{3}The requirements include funds requested for food security, health, nutrition and WASH interventions for refugees inside South Sudan. \textsuperscript{4}The priority requirements for Somalia have increased from $720 million to $1.21 billion until the end of the year.

As the above graphic by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) demonstrates, donor countries have yet to fully fund the immediate requirements to resolve food insecurity, let alone set aside the proper resources for longer-term solutions. Given that the new administration of the United States, arguably the largest provider of foreign aid, is signaling that it is
unwilling to fund humanitarian aid at its current level, SOCHUM must find an innovative solution to motivate able countries around the world to invest monetary, human, and other forms of resources into Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen.

*Long-Term Solutions*

In accordance with the second Sustainable Development Goal of eradicating world hunger, the international community must implement long-term preventative measures in the affected countries so that future political conflicts and droughts do not lead to widespread food insecurity. The local capacity to combat hunger, disease, and lack of access to potable water must be developed. The UN recognizes that “supporting sustainable agriculture, empowering small farmers, promoting gender equality, ending rural poverty, ensuring healthy lifestyles, tackling climate change, and other issues addressed within the set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals in the Post-2015 Development Agenda” are necessary to end food insecurity.

SOCHUM must acknowledge that climate change has played a serious role in causing or exacerbating food insecurity and work towards regional and global cooperation to mitigate worsening natural disasters. The UN has often stated that climate change disproportionately impacts the most vulnerable civilians—impoverished women and children living by the coast. It is up to the international community to prevent the most vulnerable people during a famine from being further impacted by environmental factors. Dr. Richard Munang, the UN Environmental Programme’s Africa Regional Climate Change Programme Coordinator, recommended a region-based food security program and ecosystem monitoring and assessment programs for “safeguarding common trans-boundary ecosystems, improving climate change resilience and building sustainable food systems”.

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In the case of future emergencies, there must be a faster response system in place as to not repeat the failure of the 2011 famine in Somalia. Though most of the region has not yet devolved into famine, various UN organizations have not been able to take the full extent of action, as countries have yet to provide what they have pledged. Furthermore, there must be long-term measures that ensure that neighboring countries are not bearing the brunt of displaced persons and resource shortages in times of food insecurity. If the delegations present are truly committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, they must invest in long-term preventative measures that distribute the burden equally among financially able countries but also foster the independence of affected parties.

Country Policy

Uganda

Uganda has now received over 1 million refugees from South Sudan, 85% of whom are women and children.\(^1\) Despite having received the largest number of refugees in the world in 2016, Uganda maintains its welcoming refugee policy and offers South Sudanese refugees a plot of land to build a home and farm.\(^2\) However, Uganda’s public resources are straining and the country is encountering its own acute food insecurity crisis, as 10 million Ugandans teeter on the verge of starvation.\(^3\) The international community has allowed for Uganda and other East African countries to shoulder much of the burden of the 2017 famine, but must step up to support the region with sufficient funding and by taking in refugees.

Other East African Countries

\(^2\) Ibid.
\(^3\) [http://reliefweb.int/report/uganda/disaster-looms-11-million-ugandans-face-starvation](http://reliefweb.int/report/uganda/disaster-looms-11-million-ugandans-face-starvation)
By late 2016, “Ethiopia hosted nearly 740,000 refugees, mostly from Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan and South Sudan” as a result of its open-door humanitarian policy. Other countries like Kenya and Djibouti have hosted tens of thousands of refugees, Kenya being home to the Dadaab Refugee Camp, the largest in the world. However, the Kenyan government is working to close the camp over national security concerns, an action that would displace some 250,000 refugees. Predictably, the camp is overcrowded and does not have proper sanitation and access to clean water, factors that have created a dire cholera outbreak. The closure of Dadaab would be catastrophic to the East African refugee situation. SOCHUM must work with countries concerned with terrorist threats to maintain safe, sanitary refugee camps.

United States

The new Trump administration appears to move forward with an “America first” foreign policy of slashing aid to other countries. In February 2017, an anonymous White House official summarized President Trump’s diplomatic approach in saying that “This budget expects the rest of the world to step up in some of the programs this country has been so generous in funding in the past.” The budget proposal includes a 25% cut to health funding and a 68% cut to the Bureau for Food Security, all actions that would reduce long-term developmental aid and compel the international community to spend more on emergency food assistance in the midst of a crisis. However, the budget boosted short-term economic support. Though bipartisan opposition to the budget proposal indicates that the U.S.’ foreign policy will not be so unforgiving, the Trump administration’s stance is still a major concern for other donor countries.

5 https://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/conditions-are-dire-438448
Western Europe

Countries like the United Kingdom and France are among the top donor countries of humanitarian aid in East Africa. Their willingness to put forth immediate emergency funding belies the contradictory motives of their military actions. The U.K. and France have supported the Saudi-led Arab coalition in Yemen with military technology and intel, to the condemnation of the UN and many in the international community. Though their opposition to the Houthi rebels is not an unequivocally evil action, Western countries have nonetheless played a role in the careless airstrikes that have killed 502 Yemeni children and injured 838 more.\(^7\) Western nations in SOCHUM must ensure that their military policies do not reverse the humanitarian aid that they are providing.

Key Terms

- **Food insecurity** - lack of reliable access to a sufficient quantity of nutritious food
- **Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC)** - set of standards for acute malnutrition and acute and chronic food insecurity. The acute food insecurity classifications are as follows:
  - **1, Minimal**
  - **2, Stress**
  - **3, Crisis**: at least one in five households faces significant lack of food and above-average acute malnutrition or can only meet minimum needs through irreversible coping strategies.

• **4, Emergency**: at least one in five households faces extreme lack of food. High levels of acute malnutrition and morality exist.

• **5, Famine**: “even with the benefit of any delivered humanitarian assistance, at least one in five households [faces complete] lack of food and other basic needs. Extreme hunger and destitution is evident. Significant mortality, directly attributable to outright starvation or to the interaction of malnutrition and disease is occurring”. A famine is phase 5 on the IPC scale and an indication of a failed situation. According to UNICEF, famine is declared when “acute malnutrition rates among children exceed 30 percent, more than 2 people per 10,000 die per day and people are not able to access food and other basic necessities.”

• Potential Solutions:
  
  • **Resilience programs**: humanitarian development programs designed to help victims resist and mitigate the effects of food insecurity
  
  • **Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM)** - clusters work “to ensure equitable access to services and protection for displaced persons living in communal settings, to improve their quality of life and dignity during displacement, and advocate for solutions while preparing them for life after displacement”

• Relevant Organizations:
  
  • UN World Health Organization (WHO)
  
  • UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
  
  • UNICEF
  
  • UN World Food Programme (WFP)
  
  • UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)
  
  • Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SHF)
Questions to Consider

- How can SOCHUM ensure sufficient funding for short and long-term solutions while working within the limits of national sovereignty and lack of enforceability?
- How can SOCHUM address the political and environmental underpinnings of famine while working within a humanitarian framework?
- How should the international community approach non-state actors with regards to aid provision?
- How should the East Africa region deal with people fleeing famine while preventing food crises from occurring in neighboring countries?

Useful Links

• http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Lessons%20Learned%20FINAL%20online.pdf

• http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5591e.pdf

TOPIC B: The Central American Drug Conflict

Introduction

Responsible for the exodus of hundreds of thousands of civilians, the Central American drug conflict has transformed the region into one of the world’s most violent, impoverished, and politically unstable areas. The rise of drug trafficking in Central America was almost an inevitability, given several factors, including: (1) Central America’s poorly developed law enforcement capabilities, (2) The difficulty that government in the region have experienced in asserting jurisdiction in areas that are effectively controlled by cartels, (3) Central America’s geographical positioned as a bridge between suppliers in the South and consumers in the North. The trade has wreaked untold economic, political, and social havoc on citizens and governments in the region, plaguing the region with chronic issues of violence and corruption. Especially hard-hit is a tri-country region known as the Northern Triangle, which consists of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Past initiatives aimed at curbing the drug trade in the region have been largely unilateral and toothless, with the potential for meaningful action hindered by corruption and lack of political will. In light of Central America’s role as an essential conduit in the drug trade, and of the immense human suffering of the region, it is critical that the Social and Humanitarian Committee take meaningful and substantive steps to combat the Central American drug trade.

History of the Topic

The variety of issues that Central America faces today are generally attributed to a period of intense volatility in the region that is typically referred to as The Central American Crisis. The Central American Crisis began in the late 20th century, when Guatemala and El Salvador were each devastated by violent rebellions that crippled their respective economies and inflicted hundreds of
thousands of casualties. Though Honduras was spared from an armed conflict of its own, its porous
borders, its proximity to Guatemala and El Salvador, and its dramatic militarization under the
influence of the United States forced it to assume a substantial burden of the war's aftermath.
Though the focus of this committee is on the modern-day Central America, it is helpful to
understand the overarching events and themes that defined these wars, and how they contributed to
the Central America’s vulnerability to the drug trade.

Though the exact events of the Guatemalan and Salvadoran civil wars is outside the purview
of this committee, the wars constituted a defining force that altered the future of the Northern
Triangle. Apart from the massive casualties inflicted, the lack of accountability for the extensive
rights violations committed during the wars have left citizens in these countries disillusioned by their
governments.

More troubling, however, is the economic and political damage that these conflicts have
inflicted. El Salvador’s GDP was in a constant decline from 1979 to 1986, and its economy has
never recovered; average income in the country is only 68% of the average income across the entire
Latin American region. The labor force also suffered as well. Compared to the United States’ losses
in Vietnam, Guatemala’s losses in its civil war were over 40 times as large (in proportion to its
population). Furthermore, over a million people were estimated to have been displaced in each of
the Northern Triangle countries. Capital flight, the flow of money and assets out of a country, took
place on a massive scale as well; some estimate that in 1980, capital flight in El Salvador was
equivalent to 11.4% of its GDP. In Guatemala, scorched earth tactics perpetrated by the
government took a devastating toll on infrastructure development. Some estimate that over 400
towns were burned during the civil war, decreasing agricultural output by over 60%. Jack Spence, a
professor at the University of Texas, contends that the post-war Northern Triangle governments are
also to blame for exacerbating the damage inflicted by the Central American Crisis. Every post-war
government in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras has pursued neoliberal policies, aimed at
reducing government and cutting taxes. While beneficial to the business sector, these policies have
done little to address the persistent issues of rural poverty and land inequality present in the
Northern Triangle, present even before the onset of the Central American Crisis. They have
contributed to the rise of a landless population, desperate for change yet presented with few
opportunities for social mobility.

The civil wars also revealed the deficient political institutions in the countries of the
Northern Triangle, an issue that their post-war governments have been slow to address. In the midst
of their civil wars, Guatemala and El Salvador were ruled by military dictatorships. At the conclusion
of these conflicts, the countries began a transition toward a representative government, reducing the
power of the military and democratizing the political process. By some measures, these efforts have
achieved modest success. Though the military still enjoys immense autonomy in Central American
countries, it no longer wields any appreciable amount of political power. Elections are held with
general procedural fairness, with little evidence of voter fraud or tampering. However, the political
system is overwhelmingly biased against the poor. Massive inequities in party resources and the lack
of campaign finance laws mean that the wealthy are effectively able to control the outcome of
elections. There are also serious flaws in the judicial system. Judges in Northern Triangle countries
are described as corrupt and easily intimidated. One telling case was the trial of Efrain Rios Montt,
military dictator of Guatemala during the civil war. In a landmark case, Montt was convicted on
charges of genocide and crimes against humanity by a Guatemalan judge. However, 10 days after the
verdict was delivered, the Guatemalan Constitutional Court overturned the ruling and removed both
the Attorney General and the aforementioned judge from office. Though the initial conviction was
encouraging, its eventual overturning raised serious questions about the integrity of the judicial system in Guatemala, and left many feeling disillusioned with the government.

The Northern Triangle is of heightened interest to organized crime groups in the first place because of its immense strategic value in the drug trade. In 2011, the World Bank noted that drug trafficking is the foremost reason for rising levels of violence in the region. Situated between one of the largest suppliers of illicit drugs, South America, and the largest consumer of said drugs, North America, the Northern Triangle owes much of its predicament to its unfortunate geographical location as well. It is a chokepoint of sorts for the narcotics trade between North and South America, and control of the region opens up cheap and direct land routes to consumers in Mexico and the United States. This geographic significance, combined with the region’s “vast ungoverned territories, deficient institutions, and abundant local-for-hire groups,” marks the area as a prime target for drug cartels.

Local gangs were the first to arrive on the scene. In the immediate aftermath of the civil wars in Central America, the weak economy, the overwhelming surplus of arms and unemployed ex-soldiers, the post-traumatic stress disorder, and the lack of effective policing all led to the inevitable rise of violent street gangs, which were eager to partake in activities such as drug peddling and smuggling. Exacerbating the issue was the Mexican government’s crackdown on the narcotics trade, as well as the United States’ mass deportation of Central American youth. These crackdowns led to the rise of more organized, transnational gangs in the Central Americas such as Mara Salvatruchas (MS-13) and the 18th Street Gang (M-18), whose members number over 85,000. By providing protection to Mexican and Central American drug cartels in their smuggling operations, these gangs are responsible for the growth and proliferation of the drug trade in Central America.
It is clear from this analysis that the prevalence of the Central American drug trade is not simply a result of the massive drug flows to the area. The inherent vulnerability of the region can be attributed to the weak domestic institutions, widespread corruption, and culture of violence bred by its history of civil conflict. Any complete analysis, and any potential solution to the Central American drug trade demands careful consideration of these historical elements.

Current Situation

With such close geographic proximity to both the world’s foremost drug consumers (United States and Mexico) and producers (the South American region), Central America has been instrumental in facilitating the illicit drug trade throughout the Americas. In addition to the direct harms of drug trafficking, the trade has also given rise to other systemic problems within Central America: gang violence, corruption, and the exodus refugees. Each of these issues will be addressed in turn, and all must be addressed in any potential solution to the drug trade.

Gangs

Amid the instability following the civil wars, the international drug gangs *Mara Salvatrucha* (MS-13), 18th Street (M-18), *Los Zetas*, and the Sinaloa Cartel were able to gain a significant foothold within Central America. According to the UNODC in 2012, there were 20,000 gang members in El Salvador, 12,000 in Honduras, and 22,000 in Guatemala. The high presence of gang members in the Central America, with an average of 206 gang members per 100,000 citizens, has enormous implications in the region.

Gangs in the Northern Triangle have four major methods of financing themselves, and the illicit drug trade constitutes their primary and most notorious method of procuring money. Approximately 80% of illicit drugs coming into the United States originate from Central America,
primarily the Northern Triangle. For example, The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) earns an estimated USD 200-300 million on the drug trade. Intense competition within the drug trade also gives rise to other forms of organized crime activity, such as human trafficking, money laundering, and arms trading. These services are often used to supplement the drug trade; for example, money laundering is used to transmit earnings to the parties involved in growing and distributing the drug.

Efforts have been made in the past to starve gangs of their financing. The most common approach is through attacking the illicit drug trade, as the profit from transporting and distributing drugs serves as their main source of revenue. The United Nations has long recognized the need to address the world drug issue; General Assembly resolution A/RES/S-30/1 notes that “we [the United Nations] reaffirm our determination to tackle the world drug problem.” Encouragingly, various countries and organizations have also taken more concrete steps to this end. The UNODC is undertaking a variety of initiatives in the Northern Triangle region, such as establishing rehabilitation networks and a regional network of organized crime prosecutors (read more). Under the Obama Administration, the United States pledged to deliver USD 301 million in aid under a narcotics interdiction program known as the Central American Regional Security Initiative (CARSI). CARSI pledged to improve the effectiveness of Northern Triangle law enforcement, disrupt movement in the drug trade, and promote safety and security at a local level.

However, these efforts have thus far been rendered ineffective. One possible explanation is that, although countries are beginning to provide aid to the Northern Triangle, the amount of assistance is far from enough to adequately meet the region’s security needs. CARSI has also been criticized for the ineffectiveness of its programs and its lack of accountability. In particular, CARSI has supported drug prevention programs of questionable efficacy, promoted militarization of the
police which led to skyrocketing crime rates, and has even engaged in human rights violations such as extrajudicial killings. The Wilson Center concluded that CARSI had a “negligible impact” in improving the security situation in the Northern Triangle.

Efforts are further complicated by the dynamic and adaptable nature of gang revenue streams. When one of the gang’s sources of funding lagged, the gang simply increased revenue from the other areas to make up the difference. For example, in 2012, the MS-13 and Barrio 18 gangs reached a truce with the government; the gang pledged to cease all violence and sharply curtail drug trafficking activity. However, in order to make up the difference in revenue, these gangs launched an extensive extortion campaign, demanding weekly payments of everyone from street peddlers to small businesses. Thus, in order to effectively disrupt gang activity in the Northern Triangle, delegates will need to adopt a multi-pronged approach that persistently attacks all possible revenue streams - a far more nuanced and complicated task than simply disrupting the drug trade.

Corruption

Widespread corruption within the Northern Triangle can be partially attributed to the failure of its constituent countries to enact meaningful post-conflict institutional reforms after their civil wars, which would have ensured the integrity of law enforcement agencies and the judicial system. As a result, some criminal organizations have managed to “penetrate all levels of government.” Members of both the law enforcement community and the legal system have been co-opted by criminal gangs, significantly damaging their reputation among community members, and contributing to the lack of trust within the Northern Triangle.

As many as 95% of crimes go unpunished in some areas of the Northern Triangle. This statistic is typically attributed to the scarcity of police and their inability to enforce the rule of law,
but it also reflects a pervasive culture of incompetence and corruption in the institutions of
government within Northern Triangle countries.

In 2014, 202 El Salvadoran police officers were tried for various crimes that ranged from
corruption, to hired killings and drug theft. Some were even allowed to retire “with honors” from
the police force, a harrowing symbol of how institutionalized corruption had become the norm
within the country. Police in Honduras were responsible for nearly 150 avoidable civilian deaths
between 2010 and 2012, with some critics calling the force “unreformable.” The 2012 Latin
American Public Opinion Project noted that Honduras possessed the lowest public confidence
rating for police in the Northern Triangle region. The force had been rendered so “poorly trained
and unprofessional,” that the Honduran government was forced to provide the military with
sweeping police powers to assist in law enforcement activities. These systemic issues within law
enforcement contributes to the power and influence that gangs and organized crime rings wield
within the Northern Triangle.

Fighting corruption must be a top priority of the Northern Triangle. According to the
Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Yury Fedotov,
“The trafficking of illicit cocaine has undoubtedly given stimulus to the violence, but the instability
is embedded in weak institutions.” Progress is being made to combat such corruption, with
administrations in all three countries of the Northern Triangle pledging to purge the government of
corrupt officials. All three countries have international anti-corruption agencies working within their
borders, albeit with varying levels of power and effectiveness.

Perhaps the most effective anti-corruption agency in the Northern Triangle is the
International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), a collaborative effort between
the government of Guatemala and the United Nations. Created in late 2006, the CICIG has spent
the last ten years tackling corruption in Guatemala, aided by sweeping powers such as the ability to conduct wiretaps and house raids (through the appropriate legal channels) on Guatemalan citizens. In addition to lowering the so-called “impunity rate” from 95% to 72%, the CICIG has taken the lead on investigating high-profile corruption scandals as well. For example, in 2015, the CICIG uncovered a massive customs fraud scandal that led to the impeachment of the President and the arrest of the Vice President. The CICIG has also been credited with lending foreign legal and political expertise in politically sensitive criminal cases, limiting the influence of corruption within the legal process. Though its influence in local run-of-the-mill cases is limited, the CICIG provides a strong and compelling framework for further anti-corruption reform in the Northern Triangle.

There have been calls for the creation of programs similar to the CICIG in Honduras and El Salvador. For example, during the summer of 2015, demonstrators marched through Honduras’ capital city to the United Nations office, demanding a Honduran counterpart to the CICIG in Guatemala. Mindful of the political damage that an organization as demonstrably capable as CICIG could potentially inflict on high-ranking government officials, the leadership of El Salvador has rejected demands for its own version of CICIG out of hand. Instead, the country renewed an anti-corruption partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), an organization that was granted far less power and influence than CICIG. For example, unlike CICIG, USAID possesses no authority to conduct surveillance and is confined to a wholly advisory role. Honduras had been refusing the establishment of a CICIG counterpart as well until mass protests erupted in response to allegations that members of the ruling National Party had embezzled social security funds. On 19 January 2016, the government of Honduras established the La Misión de Apoyo contra la Corrupción y la Impunidad en Honduras (MACCIH). MACCIH is tasked with combating corruption in the Honduras with the help of international experts in law and corruption.
However, although MACCIH will be able to provide guidance to the Honduran legal system, the agency is, by design, far weaker than its Guatemalan counterpart. Critics note that, like in USAID, anti-corruption specialists under MACCIH will not possess the investigative and prosecutorial powers that the CICIG enjoys, rendering the organization “toothless.” Given such occurrences, there seems to be a lack of political will in these countries to enact meaningful anti-corruption reforms.

In addition to the lack of political will, cost is another significant barrier to implementation of a CICIG-like organization in El Salvador and Honduras. El Salvador’s USAID and Honduras’ MACCIH programs cost an estimated USD 5 million and USD 2 million respectively to fund for a year. In contrast, the Guatemala CICIG costs over USD 12 million annually. Though the difference may appear trivial, it is worth remembering that the Northern Triangle countries are some of the most financially insolvent in the world, putting added pressure on governments to find a program that does not impose an undue financial burden on taxpayers.

Refugees

In direct response to the violence, lack of economic opportunity, and extortion, citizens of the Northern Triangle have fled en masse. According to the UNHCR, approximately 10% of the Northern Triangle's population have fled, with nearly 100,000 unaccompanied minors entering America from the Northern Triangle between October 2013 and July 2015.

Of particular concern are the disproportionate number of women and unaccompanied children who are fleeing the Northern Triangle. There are a number of reasons why these groups in particular feel especially compelled to flee the region. First, though the Northern Triangle’s issue with violence has already been discussed at-length, of special importance for would-be refugees is
the female homicide rate. The countries of the Northern Triangle possess the highest female
homicide rates in the world - where the world-average female homicide rate is 1.7 per 100,000
people, the rate in El Salvador is over 14 per 100,000. In addition to elevated levels of homicide,
women and children are more likely to be the subject of household domestic abuse than men are. A
UNHCR report revealed that 24% of child refugees from the Honduras were the subject of
domestic abuse such as beatings and rape. In addition, women described inadequate protections by
the state, and in some cases, even direct targeting by law enforcement officials. 10% of women in a
separate UNHCR report stated that police or other authorities in the Northern Triangle were the
direct source of their harm.

Country Policies

The United States

The Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI) remains in place today, despite the
consensus that the Initiative has been largely ineffective. From a humanitarian and political
perspective, the corruption, abuse and illegality engulfing the region is a direct concern for the
United States. A desire for an end to instability often results in the election of tyrannical, heavy-
headed ruler, as has been the case in El Salvador in past years. Leaders who resort to repression and
violence in an aim to impose order are not compatible with the United States’ strategic interests.
Policymakers have differing views on the most efficacious path forward: some thinkers urge for a
Central American counterpart to Plan Colombia, a $10 billion Congressionally-backed program
aimed at dissolving Colombia’s cocaine industry. Many question the efficacy of Plan Colombia and
instead push for more funding for USAID programs in the region.

Guatemala
Guatemala continues to struggle mightily in its efforts to reduce corruption and address the drug trade. The progress achieved by the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) is under perpetual attack by the Guatemalan elite, including judges, lawmakers and politicians. Guatemala faces a vital test of the strength of its crusade against corruption: in August 2017, the Attorney General of Guatemala and the “head of a U.N.-backed international commission jointly asked the legislature...to lift the immunity of President Jimmy Morales after uncovering over $800,000 in hidden and unexplained funds that went to his party’s 2015 campaign.” President Morales responded by ordering the U.N.-appointed commissioner out of the country. In September 2017, Guatemala’s Constitutional Court found sufficient evidence to permit legislative approval to lift Morales’ immunity. Many legislators fear the CICIG and lifting of Morales’ immunity is far from certain. Though much of Guatemala’s leadership is hostile to anti-corruption efforts, the program is vital and is popularly demanded. It is imperative that the program, in the face of domestic antipathy by Guatemala’s leadership, enjoy heightened international support. The international support is part of the reason that the CICIG is singularly promising.

El Salvador

Despite pressure exerted by the citizenry on El Salvador, the leadership of El Salvador remains hostile to effective efforts at reducing corruption. As previously discussed, El Salvador’s leadership declined to create a counterpart of the CICIG, rather opting to renew the toothless partnership with USAID. Strategically, a true investment in efforts to reduce corruption would behoove El Salvador and would establish progress in reducing crime. On September 5, 2017, two human rights groups from El Salvador presented reports on extrajudicial killings conducted by the police in El Salvador to an audience that included the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; the presentation is viewed as an indication that the case “appears to be entering the
international judicial stage” This development exemplifies the symbiotic relationship between crime
and corruption.

Honduras

On 19 January 2016, the government of Honduras established the La Misión de Apoyo contra la
Corrupción y la Impunidad en Honduras (MACCIH). As mentioned, the mission lacks the power of
its Guatemalan counterpart.

However, although MACCIH will be able to provide guidance to the Honduran legal system,
the agency is, by design, far weaker than its Guatemalan counterpart. Critics note that, like in
USAID, anti-corruption specialists under MACCIH will not possess the investigative and
prosecutorial powers that the CICIG enjoys, rendering the organization “toothless.” Given such
occurrences, there seems to be a lack of political will in these countries to enact meaningful anti-
corruption reforms. The presence of criminal groups, and particularly of Mexican cartels, has been
expanding in Honduras in recent years. In order to lower devastatingly high homicide rates and
minimize the ever-expanding presence of cartels and other criminal groups, Honduras needs more
substantial measures to combat corruption.

Russia and China

China and Russia have emerged as influential actors in Latin America. The Wilson Center
explains that, while Russia’s aim appears to be to meddle in the neighborhood of the United States,
China’s involvement in Latin America appears to emanate from interests in investments and trade.
China’s perceived role in Latin America is sizeable: China’s President Xi Jinping created a goal of
$500 billion in trade with the “Latin American and Caribbean region (LAC) and $250 billion of
direct investment.” A reduction in the drug trade and a campaign to counter corruption is,
pragmatically speaking, in the interest of China. China has immense resources that could be dedicated to creating institutions and agencies to diminish corruption.

Questions for Consideration

In contemplating ways to reduce the drug trade and bolster anti-corruption measures, pay attention to the causes of today's upheaval, rather than trying merely to address the manifestations of the complicated causes underlying the drug trade.

These questions can help sculpt your thinking:

- What causative factors are immutable (i.e. location)? What factors emerged because of convenience? What factors are perpetuated by tradition?
- What your country’s “comparative advantage”; that is, what distinct approaches or types of aid can your country help offer? What contribution can you make?
- How can we bolster the leverage of the international community in creating agencies to counter corruption?
- How should we best evaluate the efficacy of these agencies?
- What role can social media have in forming “solutions”?
- What are the parameters of the international community’s obligations to aid Latin American citizens whose governments violate their will?