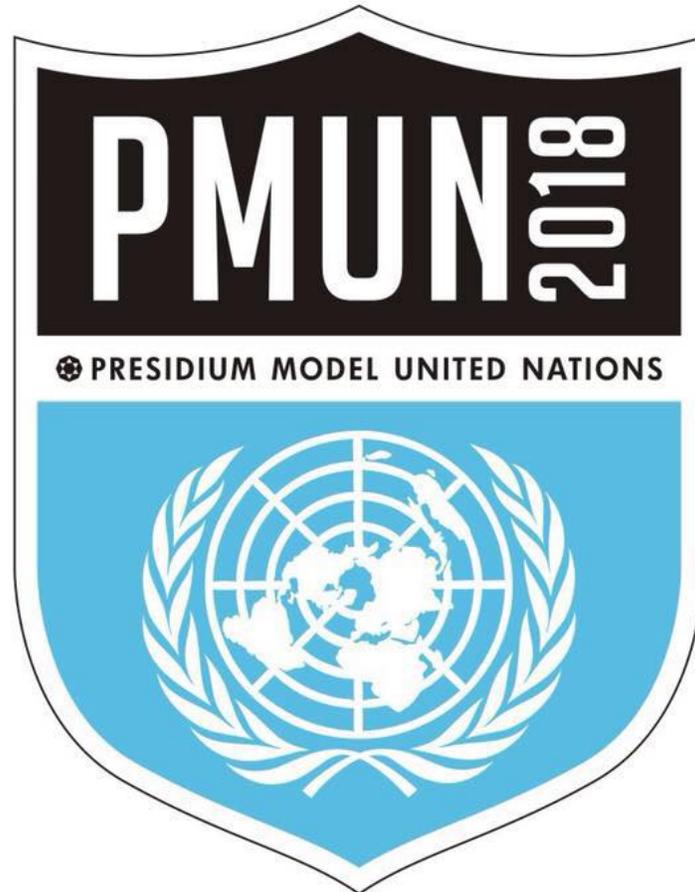


Presidium Model United Nations Conference 2018



PRESIDIUM *for*
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Background Guide 3: Case Studies related the agenda

Letter From the Executive Board

Respected Delegates

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome you to this session of the Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. The item under discussion for this session of the 3rd committee is the Elimination of all forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related Intolerance.

The issues relating to racism and racial discrimination came to the forefront during the apartheid regime in South Africa. Since then, substantial progress has been made in the area of human rights being granted to all human beings irrespective of their race, religion, color, caste or gender. These rights are promised and codified in multiple international legal instruments, the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights being the foremost document. Though the stains of racism and racial discrimination might have been eradicated from institutions and constitutions of different countries on paper, it is no surprise that cases of racism and institutional discrimination emerge in our societies, albeit in a more disguised manner.

For this session of the Social, Cultural and Humanitarian committee, I intend to focus our attention to lingering issues of racism and intolerance in our societies through in-depth research and then come up with concrete solutions to address the same.

Let's shift gears here and understand the research pattern and the method to exploit the most out of this Background Guide. The Background Guide has been split into multiple sub-parts, each sub-part explaining an important aspect related to the agenda before the committee. Furthermore, note that this Background Guide is to be read in conjunction to the articles and videos uploaded on the microsite dedicated to our committee. I am attaching the link to the microsite at the end of the letter for the reference of all delegates.

The EB has also uploaded a Research Tabulation Excel Sheet. This Research tabulation excel sheet is optional and is not going to be marked at all. But it helps delegates put their research in one place and in a more structured manner. Please do go through the Research Tabulation Sheet and message the EB in case of doubts.

Best Regards

Executive Board
Social, Cultural and Humanitarian Committee
73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Case #1: Racial Discrimination in Israel-Palestine Conflict

The Israel-Palestine conflict is one of the most disputed issues that still remains unsettled and a potential 2 state solution to the conflict seems to be a difficult compromise for both parties to the conflict. The Israel-Palestine conflict has different dimensions but the chief conflict is based on a territorial dispute between the Israeli's and the Palestinians. One of the pain points that has exacerbated the Israeli-Palestine conflict is the illegal occupation of Palestinian territories in the West Bank. The International Court of Justice through its advisory opinion has also ruled that Israeli construction in the region is indeed illegal and in serious breach of principles of Geneva Conventions. The semantics and finer details of the territorial dispute, a potential 2 state solution and the illegal occupation of territories are not but subject of debate for the purpose of this committee simulation. Here, the focus of this particular section of the Background Guide is to offer delegates a glimpse of the racial and ethnic discrimination against Palestinians and other groups residing in Israel.

Racism in Israel refers to all forms and manifestations of racial and ethnic discrimination. There are different communities that are discriminated against but racism is used most in reference to the institutional racism and ethnic discrimination of Palestinians and Israeli-arabs residing in Israel and its occupied territories. Other groups in Israel also face racism and ethnic discrimination. For instance, some members of the “ashkenazi” Israeli Jewish population hold the belief that their sect is superior to non-ashkenazi jews and hence hold prejudiced and discriminating attitudes against them. The assault on an Ethiopian-Israeli Jew at the hands of 2 police officers spurred protests against ethnic discrimination of Beta Israelis in Jerusalem and across Israel.¹

Racial Segregation in Bus Transportation

On the 1st of December 1955, Rosa Parks refused to lend her seat in the “colored section” to a white passenger after all seats had been occupied in the “white’s section” leading to her arrest. Rosa Park’s resistance to offer her seat resulted in her championing the famous Montgomery Bus Boycott that spurred the Civil Rights Movement in United States. The racial segregation of seats on buses and access to public transport is the best example to teach students about racism and racial discrimination. Something quite similar transpired in Israel and its occupied territories in the recent past. In October 2014, the Israeli Government introduced a decision to run separate buses for Palestinians and other Israeli-arabs. Under the ruling, Palestinians commuting to and fro from occupied territories into Israel had to board special buses and pass through checkpoints rather than use regular bus services. The decision got rescinded soon after its announcement after critics branded the decision as a blatant attempt to institutionalize racism and on account that the decision resembles the infamous apartheid regime in South africa.

¹ Learn more about Ethiopian Protests in Israel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vFdbLosvc8>

Institutional Racism Segregation in Education in Israel

Racism against Israeli-arabs and muslims at the hands of the state of Israel and its people can be found in almost all aspects of life such as personal attitudes, education, access to healthcare facilities, immigration rights, housing and legal practices. There exists proper documented proof of Israeli state sponsored racism against arab population in multiple reports such as that of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in 1998. The Committee in its findings concluded that the practice of maintaining separate “sectors” for Israeli jews and Israeli arabs, in particular in the area of housing and education amounts to racial segregation and that such actions are inconsistent with article 2 and article 5 of the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination. The report of the US State Dept. on the Human Rights Practices for Israel and the Occupied Territories concluded that Israel had done “little to reduce institutional, legal, and societal discrimination against the country's arab citizens”.

Lets again use the example of access to education in order to highlight issues of racial and ethnic discrimination directed against Israeli-arabs. Israel has signed and ratified the Convention against Discrimination in Education. Furthermore, a finer reading of Israel’s domestic legislations tells us that there is a prohibition on the discrimination of students for sectarian reasons in regards to admission and expulsion from educational institutions, in establishment of separate educational curriculums or holding of separate classes in the same educational institution. But the harsh realities on ground narrate a different tale of systematic discrimination of Palestinian arab children in access their to education. The report titled “Second Class: Discrimination against Palestinian-arab Children in Israel's Schools²” concludes that Government run arab schools are miles apart from Government run Jewish schools. The report found startling differences in almost all aspects of Israel’s parallel education structure. For instance, the education department allocates lesser funds per head for Palestinian arab children as compared to other Jewish children. The schools dedicated for Palestinian children are 20% larger , are often understaffed, ill-built and not maintained thus offering fewer facilities and educational opportunities to Palestinian-arab children. Palestinian children also get access to fewer enrichment and remedial programs-even though these children need them more-in part because the education dept. uses a different scale to assess the academic abilities of Palestinian children. One of the largest gap occurs in access to special education for disabled Palestinian children. These children get less funding aid and fewer services, have limited access to special schools, and lack appropriate curriculum. This leads to inferior education and poor academic performance in studies for Palestinian school children resulting in higher drop out rates.

Similar to institutionalized ethnic discrimination in the area of education, the Palestinians residing in Israel and its occupied territories face discrimination in access to other public amenities such as healthcare, sanitation, housing, public transportation etc. Delegates can go through other area’s to get a more clearer picture of ethnic discrimination in Israel

² <https://www.hrw.org/report/2001/09/30/second-class/discrimination-against-palestinian-arab-children-israels-schools>

UN Report on Racism in Israel and Recommendations

In 2017, the United Nations released a report documenting cases of Israeli discrimination against the Palestinian people. The report titled “Israeli Practices towards the Palestinian People and the question of apartheid” details cases of institutional racial discrimination through an assessment of Israeli legislations, policies and practices. The report, commissioned by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) was drafted by Richard Falk, former Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian territories. During his tenure as special rapporteur, he had branded Israel as an apartheid state and argued that Israel’s policies bore unacceptable characteristics of colonialism, apartheid and ethnic cleansing. The controversial report was rescinded hours after its release. The UN spokesperson, in their defense argued that the report had been published without prior consultations with the Secretariat and that the report does not reflect the views of the Secretary General.

The report argues that Palestinians in Israel are subject to oppression on the basis of not being Jewish and goes on to conclude that that Palestinians in East Jerusalem experience discrimination in their access to education, healthcare, jobs, housing and building rights. Furthermore, Palestinian citizens residing in Israel and its occupied territories are subject to Israeli military law while Israeli’s residing in the same area are subject to civilian laws. The report recommends the United Nations to re-establish the “Special committee against apartheid” and the “United Nations Centre against apartheid” that has the jurisdiction to report on Israeli practices and policies relating to the crime of apartheid". The report also suggests the United Nations should request an advisory opinion from the ICJ to decide if

Issues to Consider on Racism in Israel

This section of the Guide aims to offer delegates “Important Issues to Consider” that can help refresh the learnings and explore more aspects related to the case studies.

Issue 1: Does the Bus Segregation proposal constitute racism and racial discrimination ?

Issue 2: Do other groups in Israel face racial discrimination other than Palestinians ?

Issue 3: Do Palestinian and Israeli arab’s face racial and ethnic discrimination in access to other public amenities such as healthcare, housing, sanitation etc. ?

Issue 4: Should the United Nations commission another report to document if there is racism and racial discrimination institutionalized in Israel ?

Issue 5: Should the United Nations accept the recommendations of the previous report on “Israeli Practices towards the Palestinian People and the question of apartheid” ?

Issue 6: What are the measures the United Nations and member states undertake to ensure that Palestinian people residing in Israel and its occupied territories are safeguarded from ethnic and racial discrimination.

Some Important Links for Further Research

Is Israel an apartheid state?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JgpcCahwIRw>

Discrimination in Occupied West Bank:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PecEVGStsNw>

Bus Segregation Proposal in Israel:

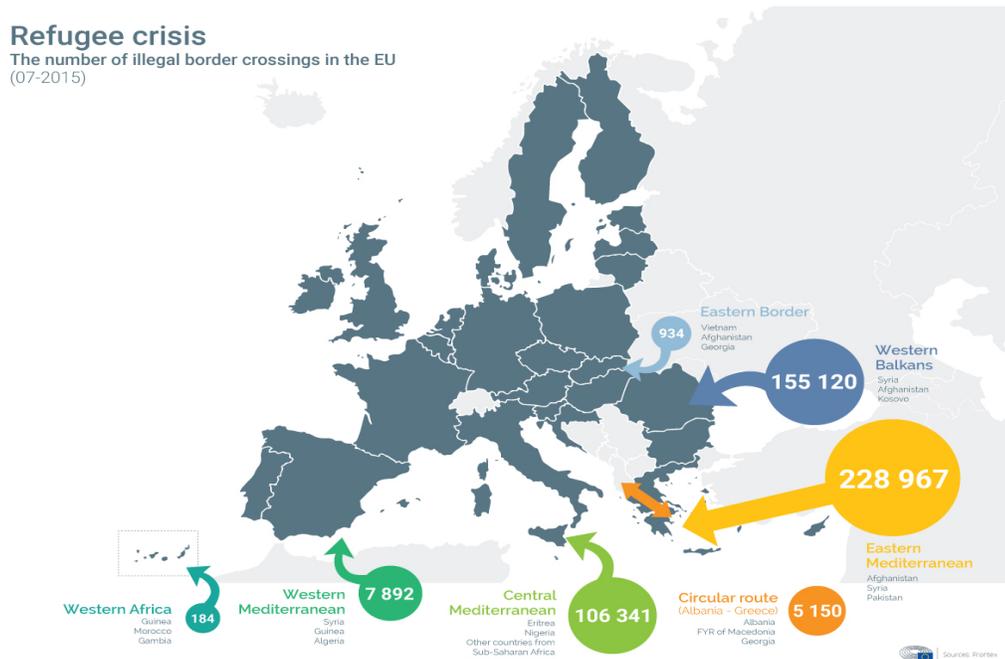
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rb7mQwOmDXw>

Ethnic discrimination in Israeli Housing:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5JKha8GMWc>

Case #2: Racism and Xenophobia in EU Migrant Crisis

The European Union has been facing a enormous influx of refugees and migrants pouring into its borders as a consequence of the armed conflicts and humanitarian emergencies going on in the Middle East. The main drivers of the migrant crisis are the desire to get international protection for those armed conflicts and better economic opportunities in case of economic migrants. This is in part because the prospect of peace in the Middle east in the near future offers little hope of the situation improving in the coming months. The proximity of European Borders to these conflicts in the Middle East and Africa have made them the preferred destination for refugees agreeing to undertake dangerous trips across the rough Mediterranean sea to reach European shores in search for safe haven.



The so-called European migrant crisis started in 2015 when European nations observed a sudden surge in the number of people crossing the Mediterranean Sea and the southeast European route through land to flee persecution in conflict ridden states such as Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo etc. Most of the refugees entering Europe are sunni's coming from muslim dominated regions in the Middle East apart from some non muslim minorities.

But since late 2015, the number of migrants entering Europe has surpassed the union's potential to cater to the humanitarian and economic needs of these refugees. The number is a little too much for European countries to handle and hold up to their international obligation to accept refugees as promised in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The European Union has rather struggled to reach common ground on issues relating to funding for border patrolling, combatting migrant smuggling, and reconciling differences among its member states on burden sharing and resettlement of refugees.

Discrimination of refugee's on the basis of race or religion is prohibited under article 3 of the 1951 Refugee convention. But the hard facts on ground express a different truth. In some European countries, the refugee crisis has sparked an outpouring of camaraderie among the local residents and authorities that felt committed to help the incoming refugees feel safe and comfortable in their communities. In some others countries, repressive border controls alongside toxic rhetoric and Islamophobia have helped foster a hostile environment for refugees and migrants. In my personal opinion, the migrant crisis in Europe has brought out the both the empathetic and ignorant side of mankind. On an aggregate basis, the influx of refugees into Europe has seen an increase in hate crimes and incidents relating to racism and racial discrimination, some manifesting in the form of targeted attacks against refugee groups and others resulting in social isolation

Causes of Racism and Islamophobia in Europe

The root causes for the emergence of racial discrimination and Islamophobic sentiments in Europe can be classified into:

1. Cultural and linguistic barriers: The cultural upbringing of European societies and those of Middle eastern and african societies is quite different. Both cultures follow their set of rules and traditions and must respect the exercise of the other's culture. Racist and xenophobic attitudes set in once one group tends to disregard the cultural identities of the other. Some fanatic groups in Europe argue that the refugees must adopt so-called European norms if they intend to continue living in Europe as refugee. Therefore, one sees that cultural and linguistic barriers can reinforce such racist and xenophobic attitudes. It is the duty of the political class to ensure that cultural and linguistic barriers are not obstacles in the integration of refugees. But sometimes the political narratives are themselves biased against those from different cultures. This has resulted in the momentous rise of right-wing politics across Europe. The legislations banning Burqa and Sikh turbans in France is a classic example of non acceptance of cultural identities of others.
2. Labor marker competition: One of the chief arguments of anti-refugee groups in Europe is that refugees and economic migrant increase the competition for jobs in the labor-market. Such an increase then in competition in turn puts a downward pressure on salaries and wages as economic-migrants and refugees often agree to perform the same job for lower salaries out of desperation. This leads to a feeling of dissatisfaction and frustration among local residents leading to a hostile attitude towards migrants, more so after economic hardships of the recession in Europe. On the other hand, there is enough documented evidence of racial discrimination against migrants. Migrants and refugees often a number of barriers in their access to labor market including racial discrimination, labor market restrictions linked to migration status, lack of recognition of their qualifications, language – resulting in an employment gap between migrants and nationals. In the absence of integration plans that address racial discrimination in the labor market, inclusion and progression in the labor market remain difficult for migrants.

3. Islamic Terrorism and related acts of violence in Europe:

The recent terrorist attacks in Brussels, Berlin and Paris has fostered a fear among local residents that terrorists might enter the Europe disguised as refugees. This in turn has reinforced the perception that all refugees might harbor harmful intentions. Such a feeling being insecure has engendered anti-immigrant and Islamophobic sentiments among the people. The infamous mass sexual assaults of a total of 1200 women during 2015 public celebrations in Hamburg, Dusseldorf and Cologne under the pretense of an arabic group sexual harassment game called "taharrush jamai" still resonates a sense of fear and apprehension among local residents.

Issues to Consider

This section of the Guide aims to offer delegates "Important Issues to Consider" that can help refresh the learnings and explore more aspects related to the case studies.

Issue 1: Is Islamophobia a structural problem in European communities ?

Issue 2: Do the recent terrorist attacks in Berlin, Brussels and Paris during the height of the European migrant crisis fuel Islamophobia ?

Issue 3: Is the EU's Dublin Regulation, that sets out the standards and procedures for processing refugee applications discriminate against Muslims coming from Middle East ?

Issue 4: Potential measures the EU member states can take to facilitate faster integration of refugees into European communities.

Issue 5: Policies the EU members states can adopt to ensure refugees and their children do not face discrimination in their access to public amenities such education, healthcare and job opportunities ?