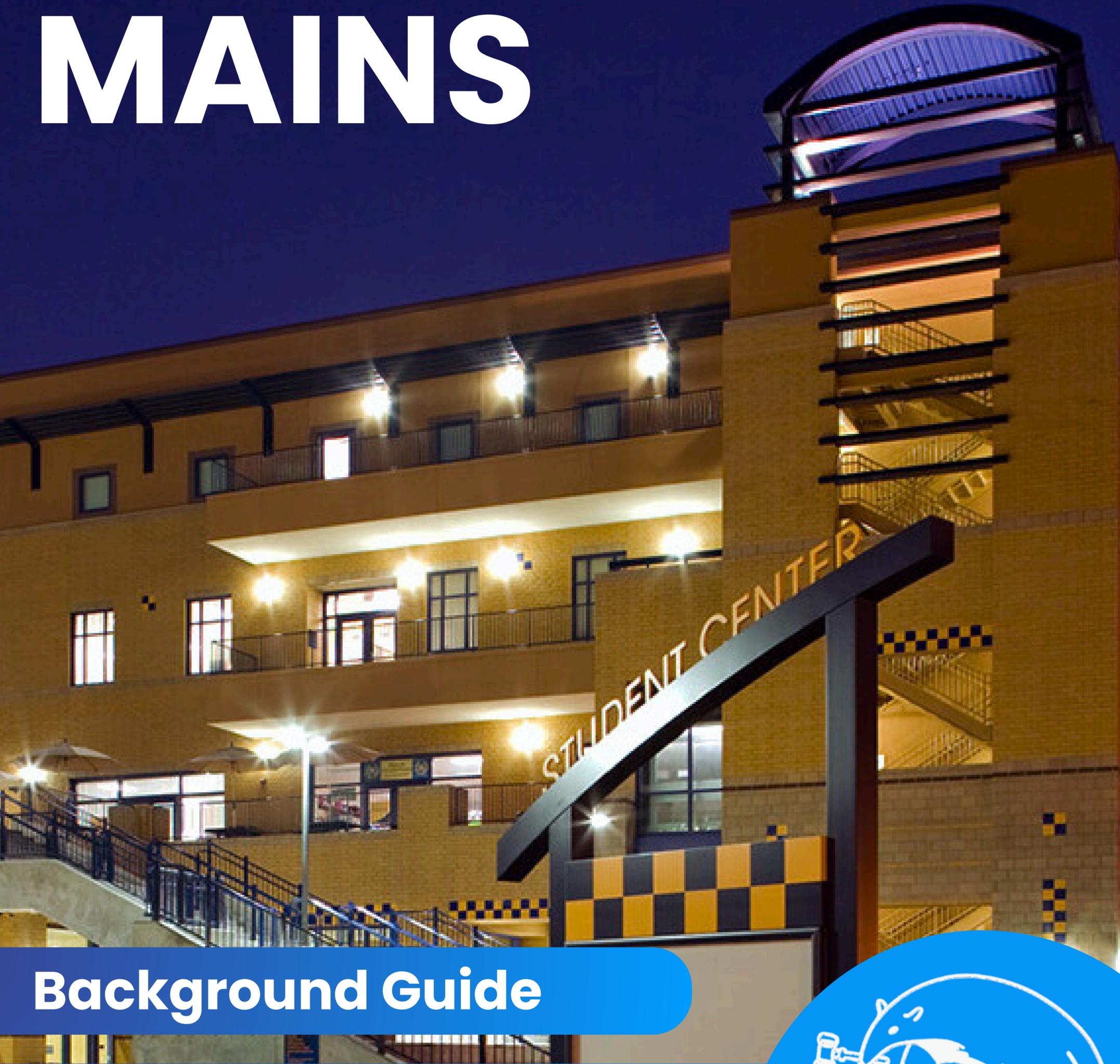


UCIMUN 2026 MAINS



Background Guide

UNHRC

Michal Mengistu



Director Letter

Hello Delegates!

My name is Michal Mengistu and I am your Director for this year's UNHRC committee here at MUN at UCI! I fell in love with Model United Nations since beginning the program in the 7th grade. This year will mark my 8th year within MUN and it's given me a plethora of incredible experiences to remember it by. After competing for 6 years and being the Secretary General of my high school program I slowly switched into conference planning and chairing. As this is my second year with UCI MUN, I spent my first year within the program as a Secretary General Assistant and Admin Staffer. I thoroughly enjoyed my time and got to understand the complexities of running a college based program with such incredible people.

On an academic aspect, I am a double major in International Studies with a concentration in the Middle East and Africa region, as well as a Psychology major with a concentration in neuroscience. International Studies was the first major I felt drawn to, yet I was always intrigued by the mind and psychology when in high school. On campus I'm extremely active, I work in two facilities on campus and am involved in clubs and law based organizations. Some hobbies I adore are reading and listening to music. I'm majorly a literary fiction fan and love to read classics every now and then. For music, I'll practically listen to anything. Some major genres I listen to include rap, house, and RnB, yet I have 7,000 plus saved songs on spotify so my list could go on forever.

For our committee topics we are exploring two ongoing global issues that explore the infringement on human rights. The first topic: Addressing the Human Rights Crisis in Eritrea aims to explore the ongoing disregard of independence in all forms. With disregards to religious and opinionated freedom, as well as punishment of incarceration and forced labor. Our second topic: Combatting Child Mortality Rates in Yemen overviews the decade long humanitarian crisis that has left the Yemeni population in devastation. Children have succumbed to the responsibility of a war not caused by their hands and have begun to suffer from lack of access to medical facilities, proper sanitation, and intense food insecurity. When exploring these topics they work to tie back to the main theme of our conference this year: Advancing upon the global issues of our community. These topics are proposed in an effort to expose your viewpoint to alternate conflicts occurring globally and give you an opportunity to research about a new discussion.

Speaking of research, the topic synopsis provided only scratches the surface of all the available research there is about these two topics. I encourage you to do your own research that not only explores the subtopics mentioned deeply, yet also find more information that aligns with your country's policy.

In total, I am so excited to see all your efforts in committee and the solutions you all provide to properly aid the communities of Yemen and Eritrea. See you all in April!

Best Wishes,

Michal Mengistu

DRAFT: UNHRC 2025

Topic A: Addressing the Human Rights Crisis in Eritrea

Michal Mengistu

Introduction:

Located in the Horn of Africa bordering the Red Sea exists Eritrea. Stretching across 45,406 square miles, it is home to an estimated 3.5 million. With an ancient presence since 100 CE through various kingdoms and tribes, Eritrea's history remains complex. From the 19th century Eritrea has been influenced by strong foreign control, beginning with Egyptian forces. Major foreign influence would spark in the late 1800s by Italian rule. From the major profit of the Suez Canal, the Red Sea became a desired commodity that Eritrea had primary access to. Italy would later seize purchases of strips of the Red Sea coast made by an Italian navigation company in 1882 and begin to send troops in 1885, beginning Italian domination.

On January 1, 1890, Eritrea would be officially recognized as an Italian colony and Italy's rule over Eritrea would be recognized by the signing of the Treaty of Addis Ababa. British rule in Eritrea, following World War 2, would create the end of Italian rule within the Horn of Africa, which would come in 1941 by placing Eritrea under colonial rule for another decade. During this time, Ethiopia worked to annex Eritrea with the promise that they once belonged to Ethiopia. In hopes of sovereign control, Eritrea would join Ethiopia under their own constitution and elected government. This federation was ultimately approved on September 11, 1952 and British forces would concede their rule 4 days later on September 15th. Yet, the annexation wouldn't be permanent; a decade later, after emerging conflicts under the federation, on September 1st, 1961, began the Eritrean Independence War. The war spanning 30 years took upwards of 100,000 lives, yet on May 24, 1993, Eritrea would gain its independence.

Following the major victory, the EPLF liberation party worked to set the constitution in hopes of forming a democratic society. The constitution ratified in 1997 detailed a society that promised multiparty elections, separation of powers, and civil liberties; yet, these expectations

wouldn't be fulfilled. Isaias Afwerki, initially a transitional president until elections were officially held, has remained in power for 30 years since 1993. Incorporating tactics to realign the focus of democratic change has been criticized by cabinet members and former close friends, who have called for reform. Firstly utilizing the Eritrean and Ethiopian war in 1998, which lasted for two years and reached peace agreements in 2000, as a method to prolong the wait for democracy. Shortly after slow democracy began to build with a new political party, the People's Front for Democracy and Justice, there was a sudden crackdown on freedom of speech, with reporters and independent press quickly going missing in 2001. Eleven out of fifteen elected officials from G-15, a group of senior parliament officials that outwardly criticized Afwerki for the abuse of power, would be arrested. Afwerki quickly redacted his statements and promises for a democratic society that were once at the forefront of his message politically. Stating in April 2001, "I don't have any intention of participating in a political party now, and I won't have any intention of participating in a political party in the future" (Bekit, 2025, pg 3). He soon after, in 2002, dissolved the transitional assembly and, in 2018, the cabinet, two fundamental aspects of the checks and balances system.

The average lifestyle of an Eritrean citizen has become increasingly regulated. Changes consisting of limits on access to independent news, high surveillance, and restrictions on opinionated expression. In addition, the rapid changes have begun to defy international human rights agreements. As Eritrea is a member of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), they have refused to abide by key agreements, raising concerning awareness in the international community. Upon the prohibition of a UN special rapporteur to analyze the human rights issues within Eritrea, the yearly report Resolution A/HRC/56/24 was issued, reflecting on a multitude of human rights violations. Within this resolution drafted May 24, 2024, several violations were

recorded, consisting of national/military service remaining indefinite, lack of due process, religious persecution, and high restriction of all media.

Description:

Unjust Incarceration:

The right to a fair legal trial and due process is a fundamental right recognized by the UNHRC yet has not been implemented properly within Eritrea. Incarceration is commonly utilized as a scare tactic in order to maintain regime control. With prime examples of imprisonment from simple acts of opinion or religion costing up to a lifetime in confinement without a fair trial. Commonly affected are independent journalists, human rights defenders, government critics, and religious leaders. In 2014, the UN estimated 14,000 people were incarcerated in Eritrea in A/HRC/29/CRP.1. Each of these 14,000 are presumed to be stripped of their basic legal rights, which produces corrupted outcomes: continuous detention without judicial review, lack of charges, or trials before a jury. Conditions of imprisonment have also been severe. With reports of solitary confinement in nondisclosed areas without record or contact, some are presumed to be murdered or to have suffered death from the intensity.

Reports of intense negligence have been recorded by former inmates. Fred Harter, a Guardian reporter based in Addis Ababa, documented the series of inhumane conditions within Eritrean prisons. One prisoner located in a center identified as Tract B was kept with hundreds of other inmates in an underground bunker, recalling the deaths of five other inmates in the cell. The space would be detailed as so compacted that their bodies would be passed overhead to the guards; he describes the temporary relief felt from the momentary space to stretch their legs. Not only are detention areas packed extremely tight, forcing those to sleep in shifts on the cold floor, but there are also reports of consistent darkness, denied medication, and lice infestations in

detention centers (Harter, pg 3, 2025). Accounts of torture and sexual abuse have been constituted as common; one inmate describes the guards placing broken glass within the field that prisoners would resort to once a day to use the restroom in an effort to injure their feet to reduce potential breakout attempts.

The ongoing incarceration conditions within Eritrea directly defy several UN resolutions and international agreements, from the nonexistent legal process to prison conditions. Many inmates have been arrested for their political and religious beliefs and several for their outward criticism of an authoritarian government. Berhane Abrehe, a former finance minister, was removed from his position in 2012 after calling upon transparency of the country's budget. Six years later, in 2018, he published "*My Country*," a novel overseas, in which he described President Afwerki as a dictator, demanded he resign, and called for the reinstatement of the national assembly (Araia, pg 2, 2024). He would soon after be detained, then imprisoned in an unknown location and never brought before a court of law. Six years later, Berhane Abrehe was confirmed dead by authorities to his family, an uncommon act for authorities to report senior officials in custody 'passing. For instance, the eleven from the G-15 mentioned formerly, who were imprisoned for their public criticism, have not been heard from since being in custody in 2001.

Religious Persecution:

With more than 10,000 religions globally, only four religious denominations—Sunni Islam, Eritrean Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Evangelical (Lutheran)—are recognized within Eritrea. Those practicing outside of recognized religions are subjected to imprisonment, a targeted group being Jehovah's Witnesses. Documented by Human Rights Watch, since 1993 the government has continuously arrested and imprisoned without formal trial or charges, with 63

witnesses currently imprisoned (Hassan pg4 2024). Even stripping those of citizenship for refusing to participate in the Independence Referendum on religious grounds since 1993. Children identifying as Jehovah's Witnesses have been expelled from school for resisting involvement in ceremonies and outcasted. Moreover, the persecution of Christians has seen a steady rise since the banning of most Christian faiths in 2002, which has resulted in the arrest and indefinite detention without trial. Release International, a project for persecuted Christians, documented 110 individuals, some being taken from their homes around 3 am with their children and imprisoned (Release International, 2024). Many of those imprisoned for religious faith have been subject to severe torture and abuse, with instances of being held in metal shipping containers in the desert heat and being forced to denounce their faith to be spared.

A preacher placed in detention for eight years over two decades recounted the torture, describing airless underground cells, forced labor, and torture chambers. His criminal offense was for holding prayer services and resisting mandated military enlistment. The preacher requesting anonymity was able to flee in 2020, but many incarcerated for religious beliefs never receive the opportunity. As 500 Christians are estimated to be imprisoned, three pastors, Haile Nayzgi, Dr. Kiflu Gebremeskel, and Meron Gebreselasie, have been detained for 20 years now and reportedly held in atrocious conditions (Release International, pg 2, 2023). Moreover, Helen Berhane, a popular Christian gospel singer, was arrested after the debut of her Christian gospel album. Within confinement she was severely beaten and demanded to renounce her faith, ultimately being released and able to seek refuge in Denmark, yet still suffers physically and mentally from the brutality. Upon demands from the UNHRC to uphold the right to freedom of belief, the Eritrean government released nine Christian prisoners, most of whom spent upwards

of 9 years incarcerated (USCIRF, pg 1, 2024). However, with only a small fraction being released, there are still everlasting strides to be made to reinforce standard religious freedom.

Media Control:

Since the restriction of independent news in 2001, all news and media sources have become highly regulated by the government. Ranked 173 out of 180 in 2023 on the freedom index by Reporters Without Borders, outside and foreign news sources aren't permitted within the country. Only media directly from the government and EriTV, a news broadcasting site, are permitted. The lack of accessibility to alternative media sources has negatively influenced the journalistic landscape, halting Eritreans knowledge of frightening conditions within their own country. One of the only ways to have true insight into the current situation in Eritrea is a radio channel, Radio Erena, run by exiled journalists in France since 2019, yet the radio waves are consistently jammed (Reporters Without Borders, 2024).

Furthermore, not only is media content itself heavily regulated, but journalists themselves share a similar fate. Since the media regulation in 2001, the sudden restrictions have left many journalists arrested and detained. As the Committee to Protect Journalists currently has reason to believe, the detaining of 14 journalists and reporters in secret locations and has called upon the UN to condemn the grave acts within Eritrea (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2025). With restricted freedom in journalism, the potential of a crime is enough to be convicted of one. As journalists in 2006 and 2007 employed by the state-run media were arrested following the escape of their colleagues, in opposition to working for the state, for being suspected of desiring to flee themselves (Committee to Protect Journalists 2002). Many reporters are arrested for outward criticism or questioning of the government, resulting in their torture or being severely beaten. A reporter recounts his experience; he was firstly detained and punished by local police forces in

Asmara because of past articles raising questions of government policy. Then he was further sent to Dahlak prison, an exclusive political prison, where he was further psychologically and physically tortured.

Forced Service and Labor:

Although many countries participate in mandatory service, Eritrea's style of indefinite service defies human rights agreements within the international community. With no way to appeal and make an objection to ongoing mandated service and punishing the families of those who dodge participation. There are decades-long periods of military service forced upon those ages 18 to 40, although the legal limit is set to 18 months (Bader, pg 9, 2019). The system of mandated service requires those to report to compulsory military training for 6 months and then are assigned indefinitely to a national service. These national services can be a plethora of assignments from refugees describing being clerks, farmers, and miners and are paid little to nothing. Commonly paid 150 nafka (9 USD) in most national service jobs, which is substantially not sufficient to feed and grow a family. Yet, to neglect a position would constitute imprisonment.

In review of international law the Forced Labour and International Labor Organization's key points of defining forced labor are involuntary service, penalization if refused, and means of political coercion, which are strongly reflected within Eritrean society. In 2023 Eritrea ranked second, following North Korea in first place, for the highest accounts of modern slavery (Al Jaazera, 2023). Many reports have been tied back to the sudden transition of students in their final year of secondary education being sent to Sawa military camp. A program that pushes them

into military service prior to fulfilling their education; as reported by the UN Special Rapporteur, they're faced with degrading treatment and torture within the camp.

In continuation, forced labor with prisoners has been recorded to be for the benefit of private institutions. A former EPLF officer reported senior officers having their own personal shops and businesses that benefit from forced labor. Prior prisoners that successfully sought freedom retell their experiences of being forced to do labor on construction sites, military installations, and properties for military leaders. A devastating account from a former national service soldier, requesting to be demobilized in 1993, described the grueling work he was forced to do when deployed within the mines. He recounts having to collect sand crystals that would result in hand infections from the sharp tools and once reporting the pain, he was told he'd receive punishment. The beating would only halt when he mentioned his role as a freedom fighter 30 years ago in the fight for Eritrea's independence (Human Rights Watch, pg 14, 2009).

Bloc Positions

African Bloc:

Multiple African countries have responded to the human rights crisis within Eritrea through the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). On December 4, 2005, the Resolution on the Human Rights Situation in Eritrea, ACHPR/Res.91(XXXVIII)05, was issued. Within the resolution Eritrea was called upon to fulfill its obligations of the ACHPR constitution, as it is a member and abides by other bodies it is a part of. ACHPR, within the resolution, expresses concern about arbitrary arrests and detention whilst calling back to multiple articles within ACHPR. Articles such as 7, the right to a fair trial; Articles 9 and 10, recalling freedom of expression; and Article 1, highlighting the obligation to uphold the

ACHPR charter.

Asia and the Middle East:

Although most countries within the Asia and Middle Eastern region haven't made any direct calls to action or addressed the current situation in Eritrea. Some countries within Asia and the Middle Eastern region have sat in on UN meetings condemning the actions occurring in Eritrea and posing calls to action. Moreover, action from some Asian and Middle Eastern countries have been strongly influenced due to diplomatic ties and alliances. Most countries within the region have recognized Eritrea's independence and have orchestrated trade and investments.

North America and Europe:

Countries within North America and Europe have primarily called upon Eritrea to respond to the UN's call to action. Multiple countries within the sectors have addressed their concerns regarding the human rights crisis within Eritrea. Moreover, a common reprimand seen is the placing of sanctions, which has been performed by countries both in North America and the European Bloc. The European Union (EU) has outwardly supported and participated in the UN's efforts to focus on the crisis within Eritrea. In addition, strides by the EU have been made to cut development funding in response to the ongoing human rights abuses.

Latin and South America:

Within the Latin and South America bloc, a polarizing viewpoint on the conditions within Eritrea is reached. A multitude of countries have opposed the actions of Eritrea and have expressed their support for increased awareness of the current conditions within Eritrea through voting in favor of the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in

Eritrea. In contrast, countries within the bloc have opposed the extension of the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur

Committee Goals

Within this committee the main focus is to address the current crisis within Eritrea while also acknowledging Eritrea's lack of cooperation. Delegates are encouraged to look at creative solutions to combat the ongoing issue while also reinforcing the expectations of the United Nations constitutions and their country's viewpoint. In continuation, delegates are challenged to alter their personal viewpoints in the creation of their solutions and have open discussions with countries of different beliefs. This committee works to simulate a realistic case that the United Nations faces and explore the difficulties when approaching human rights violations. Regarding the sensitivity of the topic, delegates are asked to approach the topic with respect and delicacy when debating and collaborating within the committee.

In order to fully address this topic, delegates are asked to familiarize themselves with the background of Eritrea's complex history before the committee to have a full understanding. Solutions addressing subtopics covered within the topic synopsis are strongly encouraged but not prohibited. My hopes for this committee are to curate solutions that target the infringement of the United Nations' Human Rights Declaration within Eritrea that not only fix the ongoing issues but

are also long-term. Realistic approaches of frameworks and legislation are an example of this to ensure beneficial change.

Research Questions

1. Has your country condemned the current crisis within Eritrea? Regarding yes or no, have they made any comments on the current situation?
2. Does your country have strong alliances with Eritrea? Do you believe your country's outlook may be influenced by benefits in trade or access to other resources within Eritrea?
3. Have surrounding countries been impacted by the ongoing crisis, for instance, the high rate of refugees fleeing Eritrea to surrounding countries? Has your country been impacted and what efforts have been taken?
4. Does your country promote freedom of expression? Are religious as well as free journalistic opinions allowed? How has your country worked to defend these rights and how can they possibly be applied to Eritrea?
5. Has your country applied sanctions to Eritrea in response to the current crisis? Or has your country withdrawn support or funding of any kind?

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Michal Mengistu

DRAFT: UNHRC 2025
Topic B: Combatting Child Mortality Rates in Yemen
Michal Mengistu

Introduction:

Within the past decade, Yemen's humanitarian conflict has been declared as one of the “worst” humanitarian conflicts globally. As currently half the population, approximately 19.5 million people, require humanitarian assistance, millions of Yemenis have suffered in consequence of the post 10 year military conflict (Al Jazeera 2023). Primary issues of displacement, food insecurity, and lack of healthcare have devastatingly impacted the current population. The conflict arising in 2014 between the Yemeni government and the Houthis has been brewing since the reunification of North and South Yemen on May 22, 1990. Deriving their name from their once leader Hussein Al Houthi, a former member of the Yemen Parliament, their main focus is to ignite a Islamic revolution within Yemen and reduce foreign involvement.. Slowly gaining momentum the Houthis began to seize territory, raising concern to the then President Ali Abdullah Saleh for the government’s control. Following the September 11, 2001 attacks the United States increased military involvement in a multitude of Middle Eastern countries, Yemen being one of which. Following President Ali Abdullah Saleh acceptance of US Military forces to operate within Yemen, the Houthi movement quickly radicalizes and openly criticizes the President. In retaliation, President Ali Abdullah Saleh works to arrest Houthi leader Hussein Al Houthi and limit protests criticizing the government. However, this effort ultimately brews the start of military conflict as attacks between yemeni government forces and houthis commence, the Houthi leader Hussein Al Houthi would be declared dead shortly after.

As the Yemeni conflict rapidly increased Yemeni citizens directly suffered the consequences of the ongoing proxy wars. Following the Arab Spring in 2010 that pushed for renouncing of government leaders throughout the Middle East and Africa, President Saleh was forced to step down. Shortly after the transition of power Saleh joined his once enemies the

Houthis, in an effort to regain control of Yemen. Gathering great control and seizing the capital Sanaa the Houthis change the standard lifestyle of a Yemeni. Invoking imprisonment or torture for resisting, halting freedom of speech, and utilizing child soldiers. Strict religious laws are also impacted during this time that relinquish women's rights. Throughout the conflict Yemeni civilians are consistently placed in the crossfire, an infamous attack occurring in 2015 after the Houthis killed and took Saudi Arabian hostages. Influencing a response from Saudi Arabia to launch 130 air strikes which would destroy homes, schools, and hospitals.

A decade later and the consequences of war still remain. Although the United Nations was successfully able broker a temporary ceasefire in 2023 that calmed active conflict, irreparable damages have been done to Yemenis. Destruction of communities have left approximately 4.9 million Yemenis internally displaced, most living in dangerous conditions that are prone to flooding and scarce access to aid (USA for UNHRC 2025). Facing some of the worst suffering in this population are children, UNICEF in 2018 described the conditions in Yemen as a "living hell for children" (Feurgson, p.1, 2018). As the cost of food has risen past 300% since 2015, Yemeni children are facing some of the highest rates of malnutrition. Recorded by UNICEF, one in two children under the age of five are severely malnourished and will not be able to reach their fullest intellectual potential (United Nations 2025). In addition, education for children in Yemen has dwindled. Currently 4.5 million children are not receiving an education equating to two in five children. Save the Children also reported in a newfound study that displaced children are twice as likely to drop out of school in comparison to their classmates (Save the Children 2024). In continuation, the lack of resources to education and intense rates of poverty result in the recruitment of child soldiers. The United Nations has reported cases of usage of child soldiers by the Houthis since 2010 to include 1,851 individuals. However, other

humanitarian rights organizations such as Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor and SAM Organization for Rights and Liberties have reported the usage to be up to 10,000 individuals (Human Rights Watch 2024).

These factors have contributed to the intense child mortality rates within Yemen. Reported by UNICEF in 2025 of 39.3 deaths per 1,000 live births ranking exponentially above the average mortality rate. In addition, the lack of proper medical access in Yemen has contributed to the devastating rates of child mortality. As under half of all healthcare facilities within the country still function, children within Yemen are unable to be properly treated. Issues like improper sanitation, food insecurity, and warfare contribute to the rapid mortality rate. Found by the International Medical Corps, every ten minutes a child under the age of five in Yemen dies. In the past years the UN has worked to support the Yemeni population through humanitarian aid. Support in healthcare, food, and shelter have been provided by UNICEF and the WFP. However, restrictions on port entry surrounding Yemen have made the issuing of humanitarian aid difficult. Developments in stabilizing care in a municipal way needs to be fulfilled within Yemen in order to support the children bearing the cost of war.

Description:

Child Soldiers:

From a decade of conflict, the recruitment of soldiers has reached some of the lowest of ages. Children have been recruited since 2014 by all parties of the conflict, confirmed by Annual Report of the UN Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict of 2022. Although the official number is difficult to distinguish, the UN has verified the recruitment of 3,995 boys and girls into militias-with expectations that the number is likely higher (Nassar, pg 2, 2023). The addition of child soldiers directly defies UN human rights legislation that restricts the drafting of

individuals under 18 years old in military groups. In accordance with placing young children on the frontlines threatening their lives, including children in war has the capabilities to render irreversible trauma. High levels of exposure to warfare and death is incredibly unsuitable for children's mentally, yet also has the ability to cause great physical harm. Younis, a thirteen year old child soldier, recounted the experience of witnessing others around him being killed and being shot himself in the leg. When recalling the event Younis thought he "was dying" and "couldn't even think of his favorite animals" (Sirgany, pg 1, 2018). When enlisting child soldiers, most are recruited under false pretenses or completely abducted. A teacher from Dhamar spoke to the recruiting of 14 students who all later died in battle, most being fifth and sixth graders.

Adults within Yemen have mentioned the direct campaign targeted towards recruiting children. From testimonies of Houthi officials going door to door and demanding parents to turn over their sons or daughters or to help financially support the war. The latter option is commonly difficult as over half of the Yemeni population live under the poverty line. Moreover, the UN has worked to restrict the usage of child soldiers within Yemen through the Children, Not Soldiers campaign and an official agreement drafted in April 2022 with Houthi officials to not use children in war. Despite this, officials have anonymously reported the enrolling of "several hundred children as young as ten in the past two months" (Aljazeera, pg 1, 2022). Efforts to protect children from becoming soldiers are critical but face tremendous obstacles in being feasible.

Food Insecurity:

Yemen is facing one of the most detrimental food crises globally, as over half the population are struggling to find their next meal. Found in 2021, 2.3 million children are on the

brink of starvation and 85,000 children under 5 have died from starvation (Save the Children 2021). Environmental factors of the war and intense poverty within Yemen have continuously impacted the ability to gain access to food. For instance, one year old Hanan became extremely ill and malnourished after her father couldn't find work or provide basic necessities like food or water. Her family resides in a one room home without a kitchen or a toilet with the closest market an hour away via walking. The conditions within Yemen have worsened post pandemic with limited access to aid and resources from funding cuts of major NGOs and UN organizations. The United Nations has declared it requires more than 50 million USD to rapidly improve nutrition programs and treatment for severe acute malnutrition.

Severe acute malnutrition (SAM) is a leading factor of death within Yemen, as 118,570 children will suffer the number increasing 34% since November 2023 (Action Against Hunger 2024). SAM constitutes having a low weight to height ratio and can affect a child's cognitive abilities, development overtime, and can result in death. Moreover, acute malnutrition is expected to harm 609,808 children and has similar effects as SAM with additional factors of creating vulnerability to diseases and death. Forms of malnutrition can also lead to organ damages and hormonal disruption, ultimately having temporary or even long lasting effects. This can be seen in Abdulmalik, a 5 month old infant, who sits at 3.7 kilograms far from his goal weight of 6 (Madhok et al, pg 3, 2017). He has faced the effects of Severe Acute Malnutrition and was brought back to the hospital after failing to respond to auditory or visual stimuli. Abdulmalik represents thousands of Yemeni children who are facing similar devastating challenges and require support expeditiously.

Lack of Healthcare:

Healthcare is another factor that is intensely limited within Yemen. Following years of conflict, hospitals within Yemen have been caught in the crossfire. Destroyed by bombings, only 50% of hospitals prior to the war are functional and accessible for Yemenis. Alongside the lack of available hospitals, medical workers are also at low rates (Alsabri et al. pg 2, 2022). According to a Scholar Journal there are less than 10 health care workers available per 10,000 people in Yemen (Alsabri et al. pg 3, 2022). In addition the lack of medical services has immensely affected the ability for children to record high outbreaks of life threatening conditions to seek medical attention. Disease occurrences of measles and cholera are widespread issues that affect thousands of Yemenis daily. Within four years the National Institute of Health recorded 41,135 reports of measles and a rapid outbreak was located in the city of Dhamar (Edrees et al, pg 1, 2025). Resources to receive vaccination services are little to none and for most the hospital can range to hours away. Moreover, illnesses like measles are easily transferable and rapidly spread to children under the age of 5. In continuation, Cholera is another illness that is able to rapidly spread amongst children. Over 5 million Yemeni children currently suffer from an intense threat of cholera and acute watery diarrhoea. Saja, a one year old girl, is suffering from these diseases. Her grandfather reporting her symptoms explains their efforts to diagnose and get her treatment. Yet, Saja's condition hasn't seen improvement and children who experience these illnesses are subjected to abdominal pain, vomiting, and death (UNICEF 2024).

In addition, the intense poverty within Yemen has also influenced their ability in seeking medical treatment. Doctors within Al Sabayeen reported the inability for Yemeni children to seek fulfilling treatment (Alsabri et al. pg 1, 2022). With reports of parents taking their children out of medical facilities before they can reach full recovery due to financial strain. However, this has influenced a cycle of parents removing their children from treatment only to return later on once

the child releases. Not only does the inability to financially support medical treatment influence seeking treatment, yet also the distance of medical centers places an issue as well. The distance from home influences their ability to remain at the hospital for long periods of time. The lack of accessible hospitals, healthcare workers, and medication harms the ability for Yemeni children to receive life saving treatment.

Deprivation of Sanitation:

Sanitation is another essential that millions of Yemenis have begun to lose access to overtime. Years of ongoing conflict and destruction of infrastructure has led to the lack of clean water and proper sanitation systems. Defined by UNICEF, 9.2 million children within Yemen are in lack of basic needs of water, hygiene and sanitation (UNICEF 2024). Children in Yemen have gained heightened responses to malnutrition, water borne diseases, and alternate illnesses. Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) are a series of diseases that have the ability to thrive in conditions of poor sanitation and environmental situations. Illnesses such as Malaria, Dengue Fever, and Cholera are few of many NTDs that have rapidly risen within Yemen. Clean water has become a luxury within Yemen and children without the essential access have borne the consequences. Ahmed, a father to five children, speaks to the challenges he and his children face daily in the search for clean water. He recalls having three out of five children search for water up to “three kilometers if clean water isn’t available in the nearby wells” (Norwegian Refugee Council 2025). Not only has poverty rates in Yemen stricken families from being able to afford clean water, yet also has begun to jeopardize their children’s education.

Furthermore, budget cuts to critical UN services such as WASH have received major budget cuts that have resulted in essential funding for sanitation in Yemen. The 2025

humanitarian funding has reached one of the lowest levels, forcing critical issues like sanitation to be overlooked. Moreover, found by the International Medical Corps, internationally displaced camps that house 4.5 million Yemenis have been flooded with waste. With 10m³ of waste being generated weekly it has begun to puncture foul odors and contaminated water sources in the nearby areas increasing susceptibility to diseases (Danish Refugee Council, pg 1, 2024). Salwa, a mother to eleven children that lives in a displacement camp after the bombing of their home, mentions the grave conditions. She depicts her children being forced to play around the overwhelming piles of waste which would often result in them gaining illnesses and viruses. Sanitation is a fundamental right that needs to be properly distributed to Yemeni children to ensure their health and protect their livelihoods.

Country Blocs:

African and the Middle East:

The response towards the Yemeni humanitarian crisis and Yemeni children mortality rates from Africa countries has been limited. However, strides have been made to acknowledge the exponential rates of migration between Yemen and neighbouring African countries. In correspondence the Regional Migrant Response Plan was created by the IOM depicting the high rates of migration between the regions. Moreover, Middle Eastern countries have warranted a greater response to the ongoing conflict. Although there are conflicting influences with some countries using the ongoing issue as a proxy war and others attempting to help fund humanitarian aid that has in turn assisted children within Yemen.

Latin and South America:

Similar to countries within the African bloc, countries within the Latin and South America bloc also have little interaction with the ongoing Yemeni crisis. Some Latin and South America

countries have influenced the ongoing conflict in arms trades, however plenty have signed on to UN security council agreements that have addressed the ongoing conditions within Yemen.

Asia and the Pacific:

Countries within Asia and the Pacific have addressed the ongoing conflict within Yemen and their major method of response has been through funding support for humanitarian aid. Countries within the region have helped to fund programs within the World Health Organization (WHO) that support cholera prevention and health services to Yemen. In addition, similar to other country blocs, countries also have differentiating viewpoints on the conflict and their political implications in the crisis itself.

North America and Europe:

The North America and Europe sector follows similar methods of support as the Asia and Pacific region. The European Union has funded upwards of 1.6 billion euros towards humanitarian assistance to Yemen (European Union 2019). This funding has been directed towards development assistance, aid to displaced people, and disadvantaged communities. Improving resources like sanitation, food security, and health assistance has supported children within Yemen. In addition, North America has also responded similarly to the ongoing issue by supporting aid by funding. The majority of funding has gone towards assisting UNICEF, WFP, and other organizations that help support Yemeni children.

Committee Goals

Within this committee delegates are tasked with finding solutions that can assist and support Yemeni Children. Curating resources that can help tackle issues such as sanitation, healthcare, food insecurity, and child soldiers to decrease child mortality rates. Moreover, when

implementing these solutions delegates should strive for long term solutions that can outlast the ever changing climate within Yemen. When creating solutions delegates are reminded to tackle solutions accurately to fulfill the goals of this committee that works to simulate a real life conversation in the United Nations.

Furthermore, delegates are given the responsibility to thoroughly research and look into their countries beliefs and history in regard to Yemen to create solutions that keep the spirit of the Yemeni people in mind as well as their country policy. My hope for this committee is to accurately uphold the rights for a child, defined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, that directly depicts the fundamental rights of children to have access to healthcare, education, and protection from exploitation and violence.

Research Questions

1. Has your country aided Yemeni children in the ongoing humanitarian crisis? In what ways have they shown effort to support the individuals struggling currently in Yemen?
2. In what ways has your country been involved with Yemen politically or economically? Has this influenced your country's response to the ongoing crisis and production of humanitarian aid?
3. How has your country worked to uphold the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child legislation that works to defend the essential rights of children and how can that be replicated in Yemen to assist Yemeni children?
4. How can support to aid be distributed without forcing too much reliance on humanitarian aid for recovery in Yemen? In what ways can short term solutions foster into long term solutions?

5. As an International Community, how can countries within their blocs or globally come together to equip Yemeni children with aid during this crisis while facing challenges of budget cuts?

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