

SBU MUN High School Conference 2017

Human Rights Council

President's Letter & Topic Guide

Hello delegates,

My name is Madeleine Feddern and I will be your chair for the Human Rights Council this year. I'm currently a Junior Education major with a concentration in social studies here at St. Bonaventure University. Other than Model UN, I'm also involved in the History Club as well as being an Assistant in the university Archives. This is my third year chairing and I look forward to meeting all of you. In terms of expectations, I expect you all to be prepared and familiar with your country. I'm a relatively laid back chair, but expect you to have an idea of the conference's rules and procedures in order for the sessions to run smoothly. I also expect you to read the topic overview and links I have provided in this guide. It should be a fun time and a great learning experience! See you in March!

Topic 1: Death Penalty

According to Amnesty International, approximately 140 countries currently use the death penalty as a form of capital punishment, nearly two-thirds of countries around the world. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights advocates for the universal abolition of the death penalty to protect the human right of life. Many countries around the world rely on the death penalty as a form of punishment. Over the years there has been a marked trend in the abolition and reduction of the death penalty. However, many countries today still use capital punishment as a core sentence for a crime.

Questions to Consider:

1. What is my country's stance on the death penalty?
2. What is punishable by death?
3. How common are death sentences?
4. How does the death penalty relate to the human rights of the citizens in my country?
5. Is death penalty effective in reducing or deterring crime? What does evidence tell us?
6. Why do countries still use the death penalty?
7. Is there a role for international organizations to play a role in eliminating the death penalty?

Links:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/death-penalty/>

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

<http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/issues/death-penalty/international-death-penalty/death-penalty-and-human-rights-standards>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capital_punishment

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_moratorium_on_the_death_penalty

<http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/pages/hrcindex.aspx>

Topic 2: Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is described as "the acquisition of people by improper means such as force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them." The United Nations combats human trafficking by focusing on the criminal justice element of these crimes. It is considered by the UN as a grave violation of human rights. Every year thousands of individuals are victims of human trafficking rings. Exploitation of these individuals include forced labor, slavery and servitude, alongside other worse conditions. The Trafficking in Persons Protocol outlines human trafficking as the "recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons" through "threat, force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power, vulnerability, or giving payments or benefits to a person in control of the victim" with the purpose of exploitation. The response to the crisis of human trafficking is usually through drafting laws, creating comprehensive national anti-trafficking strategies and also assisting countries with resources to implement said guidelines.

Questions to Consider:

1. How does human trafficking affect your country?
2. How do crime networks contribute to forming channels for human trafficking?
3. What measures does your country take in combating human trafficking?
4. How does human trafficking effect the human rights of citizens in your country?
5. What efforts has the international community undertaken to combat human trafficking?
6. What international treaties ban human trafficking? Do we need other treaties?
7. Why haven't the international community been able to put an end to human trafficking?

Topic 3: Women's Rights

According to the OHCHR women's rights are related to discrimination in many forms, including laws and policies that obstruct women from gaining equal access to property or certain professions. Women in many countries, both developed and developing, still suffer from economic and social discrimination and gender-based violence. This still happens despite the fact that "gender equality is at the very heart of human rights and United Nations values." Different countries hold different views on women and their rightful place in society. These views impact the daily lives of the women and girls who live there. Organizations that promote and defend Women's rights seek gender equality, an objective that seems to still face some hurdles despite all the progress being made.

Questions to consider:

1. What are gender issues in my country?
2. What is life like for the women in my country?
3. How are men and women treated similarly and differently in my country?
4. What laws and policies are in place in my country concerning women?
5. Do international organizations play a role in promoting gender equality?
6. Do we need new and better international treaties to promote women's rights?
7. Why do advanced countries still suffer from various forms of discrimination against women?
8. What measures do countries need to take to ensure gender equality?

Links:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/WRGS/Pages/WRGSIndex.aspx>

<http://www.unfpa.org/resources/human-rights-women>

<http://www.unfpa.org/gender-equality>

http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/povertyreduction/focus_areas/focus_gender_and_poverty/