

**Committee:** UNHCR

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**Topic A:**

The Establishment of the New Taliban Regime

**Topic B:**

The Rohingya Crisis

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## Letter from the Chairs:

Distinguished delegates,

It is an honor to welcome you to the CNGMUN conference for the year 2023. By attempting to address recurring problems, we can often find that solutions vary in timeframes, budgets, and, most of all, groups of countries that unite in order to achieve a greater good. Through diplomacy and debate, you will be challenged to find solutions to the growing refugee crisis resulting from *the establishment of the new Taliban regime and the Rohingya crisis*.

My name is Helena Plata, and I am thrilled to be your president in this committee. Since I began my journey in MUN six years ago, I have found a passion for debating and being able to find solutions to modern day issues, especially those that concern refugees. This is why I am especially eager to see how the debate unfolds and the solutions each of you proposes.

The two topics that will be debated are the following: *Afghani flight after the establishment of the new Taliban regime*; a massive refugee crisis followed the retreat of the US and other governments from Afghanistan and the takeover of the country by the Taliban; and *The Rohingya refugee crisis*; the recent escalation of the longstanding violence against the Rohingya tribe that took place in the Rakhine state of Myanmar.

Please take the time to review the topics and understand the issues and implications presented above. Take this opportunity to learn more about the problems that refugees face today, as well as to improve your debating, public speaking, and diplomacy skills. I am looking forward to the intricate debate and problem-solving tools that these two topics require. Please reach out to me if you have any questions or doubts about anything at [hplata@cng.edu](mailto:hplata@cng.edu).

## **Introduction to the Committee:**

The UNHCR, also known as The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, has the main mission of safeguarding the rights and the overall well-being of refugees. The UNHCR also promotes fundamental values and principles related to the respect of human rights, social justices, and human dignity. The main interest of the committee is to find durable and sustainable solutions for the reoccurring refugee crises around the globe.

The UNHCR was created shortly after World War II (December 14, 1950) in order to generate solutions for the vast number of European refugees who had fled or lost their homes. In 1954, the UNHCR won the **Nobel Peace Prize** for its groundbreaking work in Europe. Not long after, during the Hungarian Revolution, around 200,000 Hungarians fled to Austria, and the Office made great efforts to resettle them in Austria. The way the UNHCR conducted this process would shape the way that humanitarian organizations would deal with refugee crises in the future.

## **The High Commissioner's Priorities:**

1. *Promote and protect all human rights:* public announcements and statements raising awareness about human rights messages around the world.
  - a. *Thematic work:* target specific populations and generate a framework of research in order to act appropriately.
2. *Empower individuals:* advocacy, research, and education on human rights issues.
3. *Assist governments:* strengthen national protection and prevention of conflict through engaging with governments.
  - a. *Monitoring work:* ensure basic standards of human right protection are implemented.
4. *Set into motion human rights perspectives in all UN programmes to ensure that human rights, peace, security, and development - the three pillars of the UN - are accomplished.*

## **The UNHCR is made up of the following aspects:**

1. *Leadership:* the head of the committee, also known as the High Commissioner for Human Rights, is currently Filippo Grandi.
  - a. *The organization:* the High Commissioner is assisted by the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights.
2. *Intergovernmental body:* made up of 47 states, nominated by the UN General Assembly.

3. *Special Procedures*: experts are appointed by the Council to monitor human rights in different countries or in relation to specific issues who are assisted by the council as they carry out field investigations and make direct appeals from the victims to the governments.
4. *Resolutions, created by this committee, are usually on*: internally displaced people, human rights and mass exodus, the protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests, human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied countries, and protecting human rights defenders addressing economic, social, and cultural rights.

## **Topic A: The Establishment of the New Taliban Regime**

### **Introduction:**

On September 7, 2021, the Taliban announced that a “caretaker government” would rule Afghanistan. The Taliban, a Sunni Islamist extremist movement that had ruled most of Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001, retook control of the country after the collapse of the United States-backed former Afghan government and its security forces amid the US military departure.

### **Historical Context:**

The Taliban’s return to power comes almost 20 years after a U.S.-led military campaign took over the Afghan government after the attacks that took place on September 11, 2001. When the U.S.-backed government was in power, women had been active participants in many aspects of society and their rights, and those of ethnic and religious minorities, were better protected. The Taliban movement started in 1994 as an armed group in Afghanistan's civil war and by 1996 they had come to rule most of the country.

In 2001, U.S. international and Afghan opposition forces deposed the Taliban, and the armed group soon began what would become a nearly twenty-year insurgency. Throughout 2021, Afghan officials sought to downplay the potentially detrimental impact of the U.S. troop withdrawal while emphasizing the need for continued U.S. financial assistance to Afghan forces. Mark Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General, conducted a press conference stating that “bad outcomes” were not “inevitable” given what he characterized as the strengthened Taliban government. An external assessment published in January 2021 concluded that the Taliban actually did hold a strong advantage over the Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF). In early May of 2021, the Taliban began a sweeping advance that captured wide swaths of the country’s rural areas, which solidified the group’s hold on some areas in which it already had a significant presence, and, on September 7th, longtime Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid made his first official public appearance. He announced the names of 33 individuals who were appointed to be “acting” members of the new Taliban government (shown in the figure below).

**Figure I. Selected Taliban Cabinet Members**



### Current Situation:

The Taliban's takeover was successful because of its popular support and the lack of support of the former government. The Taliban initially stated that they would govern through different economic, political, and social policies compared to how they ruled 20 years ago. The refugee crisis has always been an issue. In 2012, for example, Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan, with the help of the UNCHRISTIAN, developed the *Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries (SSAR)*. The SSAR strategy has served as an enabling multilateral vehicle for consensus-building. More than 60 government agencies, humanitarian and development actors, UN agencies, and NGOs have been engaged in its implementation to date. The SSAR strategy notably acknowledges that refugee protection and solutions are a collective responsibility of the international community. Today, Afghanistan is experiencing a humanitarian emergency due to multiple factors such as conflict, climate impact, food insecurity, and economic downturn. Over half a million people

have been internally displaced in 2021 alone. Right now, some 3.4 million people remain displaced because of conflict in recent years. The United Nations and non-governmental organizations have launched response plans that aim to deliver vital humanitarian relief to 22 million people in Afghanistan and support 5.7 million displaced Afghans and local communities in five neighboring countries.

### **Major Block Positions:**

**United States:** The U.S. initially left Afghanistan after major political issues with the newly elected Biden presidency. However, it is advancing efforts to provide lifesaving humanitarian assistance and help fulfill the basic needs of Afghans in the priority areas of food security/agriculture, health, and education. The U.S. is also receiving multiple refugees and helping out alongside the UN.

**China:** China has been communist for a long time, therefore meaning that following with the Talibans history, then China is against the US. China is more concerned about the economic aspect of the crisis rather than the growing refugee crisis.

**Afghanistan:** Since the former Afghan government is no longer in power, they do not have control over the decisions taken in the country. They understand the crisis and the importance the issue holds however they are powerless against the situation.

**Pakistan:** Pakistan is one of the countries that have been helping the refugees the most by leading refugee camps and aids for them. Alongside the UNHCR, they have been working to accomplish the SSAR plan.

**Germany:** Germany is also one of the countries that has been receiving refugees and helping out with refugee aids. All of the attempts to help out Afghanistan have been accompanied by the UNHCR.

### **Guiding Questions:**

1. How has the crisis evolved during the Taliban rule?
  - a. Has any other country been affected by the refugee crisis?
2. Has the refugee crisis impacted other aspects such as economic and political views of the Taliban?
3. How have other Taliban-allied countries reacted to the growing efforts to aid Afghan refugees?
4. How has the Taliban changed its costumes?



- a. Why has it created such a crisis?
5. Has the continuous aid of the SSAR been useful?
  - a. Should other aids and solutions be taken into account even if that means acting outside of the UN?

## **Topic B: The Rohingya Crisis**

### **Introduction:**

The Rohingya people are currently the largest stateless population in the world, without recognition as citizens or permanent residents of the country of Myanmar. This group has been persecuted by the state of Myanmar for well over three decades, leaving them with limited access to food, education, jobs, and health services. The massive outflow of the Rohingya people has also created difficult resettlement issues in neighboring countries, notably Bangladesh.

### **Historical Context:**

The Rohingya people trace their origins to the fifteenth century in a region that today forms part of Myanmar. They identify as Muslim and have, throughout centuries, faced challenges with the recognition of their homeland. The current crisis began in 1982 when Myanmar passed a citizenship law that denied Rohingya people of nationality and therefore left them stateless. After this, the minority faced heavy persecution and were denied other basic rights that citizens from Myanmar enjoyed.

August 2017 marks the date when the genocide began. The government of Myanmar undertook police and military interventions against the minority, triggering large numbers of Rohingya people to flee to the nearby country of Bangladesh as well as other surrounding countries.

### **Current Situation:**

As of October 2022, over 943,000 Rohingya refugees reside in Ukhiya, the vast majority live in one of 34 extremely congested camps. The largest site, Kutupalong-Balukhali, is host to more than 635,000 refugees. The UNHCR released the following statement after the news broke: “UNHCR is working to mainstream refugee protection in all refugee settlements. With its partners, it is developing a referral system and safe spaces for survivors of gender-based violence. We are also enhancing efforts to identify and refer children at risk for the appropriate support.”

### **Major Block Positions:**

The United States: In March 2022, the US Secretary of State declared that “members of the Burmese military committed genocide and crimes against humanity against Rohingya.” (The United States formerly refers to Myanmar as Burma). The US has also donated more than 170

million USD in additional humanitarian assistance to Rohingya people inside and outside of Myanmar and to Bangladesh for refugee aid.

Myanmar: Myanmar does not recognize Rohingya as a settled group and throughout the decades have deprived them of various rights such as nationality, safety, wealth, and stability. Over all, Myanmar has worked towards the Rohingya people leaving Burma.

China: China has an economic relationship with Myanmar and thus are not very interested in addressing the refugee crisis but rather how they can benefit economically. Access to Myanmar's ports and naval installations provide China with strategic influence in the Bay of Bengal.

Bangladesh: The identical religious identity shared by Bangladeshi and Rohingyas has generated sympathy among the citizens of Bangladesh, who every year raise approximately 1.2 billion USD to donate to the group. Bangladesh is one of the countries that has aided the most refugees with access to shelter, food, and vaccines.

Pakistan: Currently there are approximately 400,000 Rohingya refugees attended to in the country of Pakistan. With the assistance of the UNHCR, Pakistan has created a joint program called "Refugees Affected and Hosting Areas."

### **Guiding Questions:**

1. How has your country helped aid refugees?
  - a. Monetary donations? Refugee centers?
2. How has Myanmar reacted to the countries allied to Rohingya?
3. Has your delegation participated in any plan made by the UNHCR or other organizations to help the refugees?
  - a. Did they help create the plans?
4. How has religion become a problem?
5. What can your delegation do to help aid refugees?
  - a. Can they provide space to build another camp?