

OSHA



GMUNC

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to GMUNC XI! In this specialized committee, you will be tasked with representing member nations of the UN overseeing the organization of OCHA, a UN body responsible for coordinating and managing international resources to help tackle humanitarian crises. This special conference has been called to tackle the humanitarian crisis that is currently ongoing in the nation of Myanmar. Given the ongoing situation of this matter, this scenario will be simplified timeline-wise and the committee's approach will act like it is currently **July 2024**.

GMUNC will be held at Gunn High School on **October 19th, 2024**. For more information about the conference, please visit the GMUNC website at gmunc.onrender.com. You will be able to find guidelines for position papers, as well as an example position paper, on the website. Position papers submitted by **October 12, 11:59 PM** will be eligible for research awards. Delegates must submit position papers by **October 18, 11:59 PM** to be eligible for any committee awards. Please send position papers in .pdf format, with the title formatted like “[nation] - Position Paper”, to our committee email at gmunc.ocha@gmail.com. Of course, we are also always happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have. We look forward to meeting all of you in committee!

Gene Lee

OCHA Committee Head Chair

About the Dais

Head Chair: Gene Lee



Gene Lee is a senior at Gunn High School and is currently in his 3rd year participating in Model United Nations. He is looking forward to being the Head Chair for the OCHA committee and its tackling of the current humanitarian crisis in Myanmar. He will be excited to see the thoughtful debate, creative solutions, and tactful compromises that all delegates will come up with through the time in committee. Outside of MUN, Gene enjoys studying and discussing topics such as history, political philosophy, economics, and flag designs.

Co-Chair: Aliya Khan

Aliya is a current Sophomore at Aragon High School. This is her first year participating as a staff



member in Gunn MUN. She has been participating in Model United Nations for two years, attending Gunn MUN as a delegate last year. She is excited to create an enjoyable and immersive experience as we discuss this pressing topic. She hopes to see many delegates learning from this topic and finding innovative and original ways to look at issues that may arise. Apart from MUN, Aliya loves playing volleyball for her club team and playing the oboe in her free time.

About This Committee

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is a UN body that coordinates international humanitarian response efforts. Established in 1991 by the UN General Assembly, OCHA has been responsible for coordinating and managing international efforts in numerous crises. OCHA does so by working with various United Nations, non-governmental (NGOs), and humanitarian organizations in order to respond to and deliver humanitarian aid to those affected by complex emergencies and natural disasters. OCHA also helps to spread and share information regarding humanitarian issues and ongoing emergencies around the world, helping to bring further awareness to ongoing issues. It coordinates fundraising efforts and manages pooled funding mechanisms, such as the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), to finance emergency responses, as well as leading the development of strategic response planning and outlining coordinated actions for humanitarian partners. Throughout its history, OCHA has brought the world together to help tackle global problems, with 2020 alone seeing 98 million people receiving necessary humanitarian aid. This accounts for 70 percent of the total population targeted in the United Nation's 25 Humanitarian Response Plans. Such achievements included over 10 million women and young people receiving life-saving sexual and reproductive health care and services to address GBV and 96.9 million people receiving direct food assistance in the first nine months of 2020.

Introduction to Topic

The issue of Civil Wars has long brought internal struggles and suffering to countries affected by it. In the crossfire between two opposing factions jockeying for power over the nation are the innocent civilians trying to survive in their divided nation. The situation in Myanmar is no different. The country has long faced a history of civil unrest resulting from many ethnic and religious tensions and economic mismanagement from the unstable dictatorial rule of its military junta. The military had long ruled the country ever since the coup back in 1962 and now again after a coup in 2021. This has led to open hostilities between the military and the various peoples of Myanmar wanting democratic representation and has led to devastation throughout the country, with many towns and villages being the site of



Young students protesting against the military's illegal coup in the wake of the nation's 2020 election- AFP.

the battles between these groups. This coupled with the further oppressive and ruthless actions by the military government has led to a widespread refugee crisis in Myanmar, with hundreds of thousands of people fleeing the country, particularly into neighboring Bangladesh. Meanwhile, those still trapped within the country are facing much oppression, especially ethnic minorities like the Rohingya people are suffering from inadequate housing, disease, and starvation. As OCHA is responsible for responding and coordinating efforts on such emergencies a session is being called on how best to utilize resources to help the suffering people of Myanmar and who best to work with to prevent this crisis from spreading.

Historical Context

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar (formally known as Burma until 1989), has experienced a history of internal ethnic and political divisions since its independence from the British Empire back in 1948. Initially, the country began as a parliamentary democracy like many of its other neighboring countries on the Indian subcontinent. This would forever change however in 1962 when General Ne Win led a coup with Myanmar's military, the Tatmadaw, that toppled the democratic government and established a military junta that would rule the country for the next twenty-six years.

Throughout its ironfisted rule over the country, the junta would face opposition from the many people of Myanmar, especially from regions with the nation's numerous ethnic minorities. Even before Myanmar gained independence, the over hundred different minority groups of Myanmar faced widespread discrimination, lack of representation, and economic opportunities, as the nation was dominated by the majority Burman, or Bamar, ethnic group who held a majority of government and military positions. This led to regional fighting in multiple regions of Myanmar between Myanmar's military and the numerous minor ethnic groups throughout Myanmar who founded paramilitary and militia groups to oppose the national government. The military coup in 1962 would only exacerbate these tensions, as the junta would begin to curtail ethnic minorities' rights, and use scorched-earth tactics against some ethnic armed organizations. Such fighting would continue to this day, with some analysts describing it as the longest civil war in the world.

In 1974, General Ne Win instituted a new constitution for the country based on an isolationist and socialist economic policy that saw the nationalization of Myanmar's major industries. This would lead to a rapid deterioration of the economy, and over the years

corruption, food shortages, and economic mismanagement led to widespread protests. Despite Ne Win resigning as chairman of his party in 1988, the situation in Myanmar barely improved. In 2007, the Saffron Revolution, an anti-government protest notably led by Buddhist monks occurred due to rising fuel prices. Due to growing international pressure, and the need for economic investment, the military would begin to loosen its grip on the nation, though it still believed it would hold on to power. The military thus pushed for a new constitution in 2008 that gave it widespread powers even when transitioning to civilian rule. While the military junta would officially be dissolved in 2011, and be replaced with a civilian parliament, this new government was still dominated by the military and led by former army bureaucrat, Thein Sein. Reforms were made under President Thein Sein and slowly it seemed that representative democracy had come to the country. In 2015, the first nationwide multiparty elections happened in Myanmar.

The results would be a landslide victory for Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) Party, with longtime confidant of Suu Kyi, Htin Kyaw becoming President. Such hope for a continuing democratic institution would be dashed in the nation's second election in



The Military Junta celebrating the nation's 75th year of independence with a display of force- AFP/Getty Images

2020. With a devastating electoral loss for the military's proxy party, the Tatmadaw would declare electoral foul play by the NLD and would go on to coup the civilian government. The junta, now officially called the State Administration Council, detained and charged de facto civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi with corruption and other crimes. Alongside this, they placed lawmakers from the NLD and other parties, as well as many activists, under house arrest. Much

of the nation's populace has rejected this seizure of power, with widespread demonstrations occurring immediately after the arrival of the news. International sanctions were levied against the junta for its illegal takeover and brutal crackdown on protesters. Due to the egregious actions by the military, democratic activists and escaped NLD lawmakers founded the National Unity Government (NUG). In addition to this, the organization would found militant groups to directly fight against the Tatmadaw's rule, creating the People's Defense Force. This force, along with the numerous local ethnic militant groups have been fighting the Tatmadaw ferociously, with fighting occurring all across the country.

This has brought much economic turmoil and further increased the already despairing poverty line of the nation. The healthcare system collapsed in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hunger runs rampant throughout, and millions have attempted to flee poverty and fighting to neighboring nations.

Current Situation

The current situation in Myanmar is heavily dire, with the nation consumed in a bloody civil war with the military fighting against not only the NUG's People's Defense Force, but also multiple other armed insurgents and militias from the nation's various oppressed minorities. The result of all of this alongside international sanctions has led to a devastated economy, rampant poverty, and one of the most severe refugee crises in modern history. The United Nations has reported that there are currently over two million civilians who have been displaced by the conflict. Of particular note is that of one of Myanmar's long-persecuted ethnic groups, the Rohingya, who number over a million. Living conditions for the more than one million Rohingya people living across the border in Bangladesh have continued to deteriorate since 2017, and government crackdowns have resulted in more than seven hundred thousand people fleeing their homes.

Today, most of these Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh live in camps in and around Cox's Bazar, which is just across the Myanmar border and the largest refugee camp in the world. Rohingya refugees living in the camps are often deprived of basic services and necessities, with persistent shortages in humanitarian aid, alongside overcrowding has made these camps highly vulnerable to extreme weather in the region. In March of 2021, a catastrophic fire that spread throughout Cox's Bazar camp led to the deaths of several dozens of people and the destruction of nearly ten thousand shelters. This was compounded further by the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic which further led to an exacerbated health crisis in the refugee camps. To make matters worse, in May of 2021, the Bangladesh government attempted to remove the Rohingya refugees living in these camps, resulting in further deaths and hardships for the refugees.

Past UN Actions

Currently, OCHA has been engaged in the conflict in Myanmar for many years. At present, there are an estimated 18.6 million people in need, with 5.5 million being directly targeted for humanitarian relief. Last year, OCHA raised 392.8 million out of the suggested 887.6 million that was estimated to provide adequate humanitarian relief. For the coming year, they have also set a target of 993.5 million. At the moment, OCHA holds three strategic objectives outlining the highest needs within the country. These include: identifying and monitoring protection risks, working to make protection a core factor within all humanitarian relief; providing aid and reducing suffering for the four million people who have faced displacement; and emphasizing the necessity of essential services for communities lacking access. OCHA continues to prioritize struggling communities that lack basic needs.

Looking at previous crises with similar circumstances to what is currently occurring in Myanmar will allow for a more comprehensive view of how best to tackle the ongoing civil and public issues. OCHA has sent humanitarian aid to many people who are in similar living conditions to those in Myanmar at the moment. One example with circumstances similar to Myanmar is the aid provided to Gaza in 2013.

Gaza (2013)

Political tensions continued to rise during this time in Gaza. Though the ceasefire agreement from the previous year shed some light on the situation, the living conditions continued to deteriorate. Similar to Myanmar, there was a high percentage of people being displaced, with roughly 10% increasing to 25% within a year. OCHA sent aid to Gaza, specifically targeting communities lacking basic needs. They focused on communities where borders made it difficult to sustain basic needs. OCHA continued to put a strong focus on

children within these conflicts, sending aid to communities with high rates of violence among children. Though the situation differs from conflicts in Myanmar, we can still draw similarities between the aid being given in these situations.

Possible Solutions

When looking at possible solutions, we want to emphasize supporting the people of Myanmar who are struggling due to conflict. Attempt to find solutions that focus on swift ways to give aid to people who are suffering currently. One possible approach to this could be looking into other instances where humanitarian relief had to be provided for similar circumstances. Find occasions where relief was overly successful within communities and how it was implemented. Look specifically into the aid that has been given to the people in Myanmar over the previous two years. How has this relief worked for or against the general living conditions that are being faced? Put focus on communities that have little to no access to basic needs. Find ways to provide these groups with necessities in ways that can be sustained. Take into account political tensions that could interfere with relief being given. How does the conflict interfere with the possibility of spreading aid to the people of Myanmar?

Due to the sensitivity of the situation, we could also put some focus on political conflicts, focusing on the roots of the issues that the majority of people in Myanmar have been facing. Finding the cause of the issues is critical to providing adequate aid to the people of Myanmar. When looking at the internal conflict, try to find ways to reduce violence. With creating legislation being difficult, find separate ways to reduce casualties in uninvolved communities.

Finally, look into other humanitarian organizations working towards similar goals. Some examples of this are the Myanmar Red Cross and the World Concern. What have these organizations accomplished, and how can this be of use? Base solutions on the knowledge of OCHA's core beliefs and what they are actively trying to accomplish.

Delegate List

1. Argentina
2. Australia
3. Bangladesh
4. Belarus
5. Belgium
6. Bolivia
7. Brazil
8. Bhutan
9. Burundi
10. Canada
11. Cape Verde
12. China
13. Czech Republic
14. Denmark
15. Dominican Republic
16. Egypt
17. France
18. Germany
19. Greece
20. Hungary
21. India
22. Italy
23. Japan
24. Jordan
25. Kenya
26. Lithuania
27. Morocco
28. Sweden
29. Thailand
30. United Kingdom
31. United States
32. Vietnam

Bibliography

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). "Myanmar."

OCHA, <https://www.unocha.org/myanmar>.

Deutsche Welle (DW). "Myanmar: Civil War of Many Against Many Tearing Country Up." DW,

<https://www.dw.com/en/myanmar-civil-war-of-many-against-many-tearing-country-up/a-6893896>

5.

Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). "Rohingya Crisis in Myanmar." CFR Global Conflict

Tracker, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/rohingya-crisis-myanmar>.

Human Rights Watch (HRW). "UN Shows Conflicting Approaches to Myanmar Crisis." HRW, 4

April 2024,

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/04/04/un-shows-conflicting-approaches-myanmar-crisis#:~>

[=In%20December%202022%2C%20the%20council,institutions%2C%20and%20engage%20in%20dialogue.](https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/04/04/un-shows-conflicting-approaches-myanmar-crisis#:~)

United Nations Myanmar. "About the UN in Myanmar." UN Myanmar,

<https://myanmar.un.org/en/about/about-the-un>.

United Nations. "Security Council Press Statement on Myanmar." UN News, 30 January 2024,

<https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15652.doc.htm>.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). "Myanmar:

Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024." OCHA, December 2023,

<https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/myanmar/myanmar-humanitarian-needs-and-respons>
[e-plan-2024-december-2023-enmy.](https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/myanmar/myanmar-humanitarian-needs-and-respons)

The Brookings Institution. "Myanmar's Crisis Tests ASEAN." Brookings,

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/myanmars-crisis-tests-asean/>.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). "Global Humanitarian Overview 2021 - Introduction and Foreword." OCHA,

<https://2021.gho.unocha.org/introduction-and-foreword/global-achievements/>.

CFR, Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). "Myanmar's Troubled History: Coups, Military Rule, and Ethnic Conflict." CFR,

<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/myanmar-history-coup-military-rule-ethnic-conflict-rohingya>.

The Brookings Institution. "The Civil War in Myanmar: No End in Sight." Brookings,

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-civil-war-in-myanmar-no-end-in-sight/>.

The Philippine Star. "Myanmar Faces Alarming Risk of Escalating Civil War: UN." The Philippine Star, 23 Sept. 2021,

<https://www.philstar.com/world/2021/09/23/2129197/myanmar-faces-alarming-risk-escalating-civil-war-un>.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

"Myanmar." OCHA, <https://www.unocha.org/myanmar>.

Humanitarian Action. "Myanmar Humanitarian Response Plan 2023." Humanitarian Action, <https://humanitarianaction.info/plan/1160>.

Humanitarian Action. "Myanmar Humanitarian Response Plan 2024." Humanitarian Action, <https://humanitarianaction.info/plan/1175>.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). "Annual Review 2014." OCHA,

https://www.ochaopt.org/sites/default/files/ocha_opt_annual_review_2014.pdf.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). "Syrian Arab Republic." OCHA, <https://www.unocha.org/syrian-arab-republic>.

Frontier Myanmar. "Myanmar Junta Marks Independence Day with Show of Force, Mass Pardons." Frontier Myanmar.

<https://www.frontiermyanmar.net/en/myanmar-junta-marks-independence-day-with-show-of-force-mass-pardons/>.