



Dear Delegates,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the 2022 West Texas A&M Model United Nations Conference!

The following pages are designed to guide you in the research of the topics that will be debated in our committees for the 2022 session. Please note this guide only provides the basis for your investigation. It is your responsibility to find as much information necessary on the topics and how they relate to the country you represent. Such information should help you write your Position Paper, where you need to cite the references in the text and finally list all references in the Modern Language Association (MLA) format.

The more information and understanding you acquire on the topics, the more you will be able to influence the Resolution writing process through debates, formal and informal caucuses, and the WTMUNC experience as a whole. Please feel free to contact us if and when you face challenges in your research or formatting your Position Papers. We encourage you to learn all you can about your two topics first and then study your country with regard to the selected topics. Please remember that all committee members need to be well versed and ready to debate both the listed topics.

Enjoy researching and writing your Position Papers.

We look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

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United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

The United Nations Human Rights Council is among the newer organs of the United Nations, founded only in 2006.

The United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) is comprised of 47 member states of the UN, elected by the General Assembly to specifically address issues related to the promotion and protection of Human Rights across the globe. The organization meets regularly in Geneva.

The HRC meets throughout the year, and discusses both ongoing issues of human rights as well as crises as they arise. As a smaller body, it is better able to quickly react to issues of importance throughout the globe, while still being representative of the global community.

Among the Human Rights Council's most important functions is its regular assessment of Human Rights for each individual UN member state, which occurs every 4.5 years. This comprehensive review makes strong recommendations for how each nation can improve its human rights situation, and ranges from issues of free speech or press to imprisonment and treatment of political prisoners.

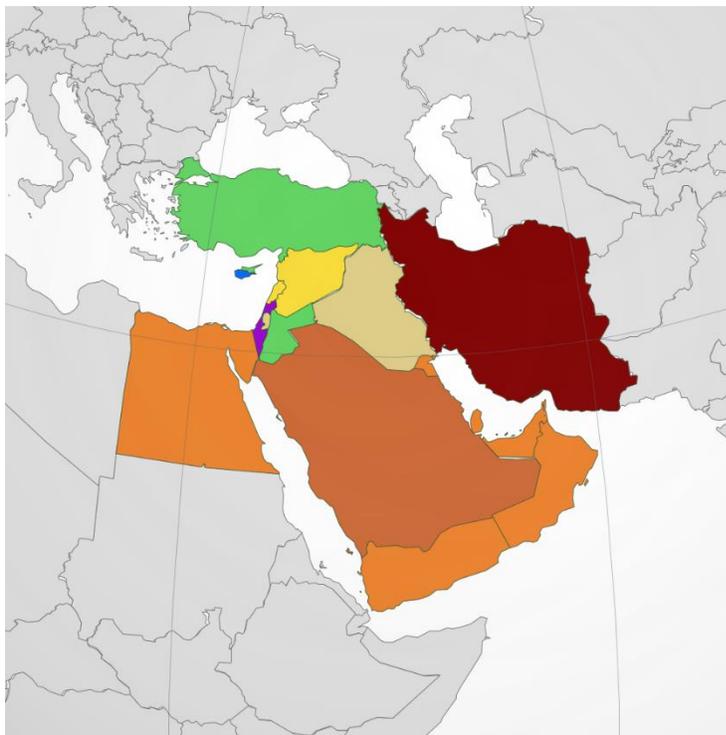
Among the actions available to the Human Rights Council are special investigators or special rapporteurs, whose function is to act with UN mandate to investigate and expose human rights abuses in the member states. This can include conducting investigations, fact-finding missions, advocacy, public awareness, or technical cooperation with states or oppressed peoples.

States acting outside of accordance with the UN charter can then face recommendations of sanctions by the HRC, to be referred to the UN Security Council or General Assembly for further action.

The HRC has faced criticism for participation by states with less than stellar human rights records, and an increasing amount of effort has been spent to increase awareness and education on human rights throughout the globe.

Topic Background – LGBTQ+ Rights in the Middle East

LGBTQ+ rights remain a serious issue globally, with the Middle East being a region of particular interest given its strict laws regarding homosexuality, and relative intolerance of non-heterosexual relationships and gender expression. Members of the LGBTQ+ community are routinely and systemically discriminated against in the region, although this varies drastically both legally and societally by nation. Regardless, many middle eastern countries have oppressive policies targeting the LGBT community. The punitive forms of punishment for breaking these laws can vary in severity from discrimination and denial of same-sex benefits or union, to being jailed, extrajudicial mob violence, or particularly sadistic forms of torture.



- Same-sex marriage recognized
- Civil unions
- Homosexuality is legal
- Anti-propaganda law
- Unenforced prison
- Prison
- Prison, unenforced death penalty
- Enforced death penalty

Though the region has seen considerable strides toward LGBTQ+ rights and equality, it remains illegal to be a member of the LGBTQ+ community in nine Middle Eastern nations.

While this is in part driven by social and religious attitudes, these vary greatly by region, and an

increasing acceptance of members of the LGBTQ+ community has been seen among members of all cultures and religious groups over the past few decades. Despite this, LGBTQ+ groups active in the region face particularly severe consequences for their activism, and have called on the international community to play a greater role in pressuring domestic regimes to recognize their basic human and civil rights. Traditionally focused on homosexual male relationships, this has increasingly taken a dimension to include non-binary, transgender, lesbian, and other forms of sexual identity and gender expression.

Past International Action(s)

There have been many actions by the United Nations on this issue. On June 30th, 2016, The General Assembly voted and adopted a resolution by the Human Rights Council specifically in protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The resolution passed with a documented recorded vote of all the countries who voted in favor, against, and abstained. Notably, nations in opposition included many of its Middle Eastern and North African members, highlighting the difficulties faced by members of the LGBTQ+ community in the region:

The countries **voted in favor** of the resolution are as follows:

Albania, Belgium, Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Georgia, Germany, Latvia, Mexico, Mongolia, Netherlands, Panama, Paraguay, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Venezuela, and Viet Nam.

The countries that **voted against** the resolution are as follows:

Algeria, Bangladesh, Burundi, China, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Togo, and United Arab Emirates.

The countries that **abstained** from the resolution are as follows:

Botswana, Ghana, India, Namibia, Philippines, and South Africa

Most recently, in 2019, the United States government under the Trump Administration led a global campaign to end the criminalization of homosexuality in many countries in response to a report of a young gay man being hanged to death in Iran. The campaign aimed to cooperate with other global organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, State Department's Bureau of Democracy, and Human Rights and Labor to raise awareness of this issue working alongside other countries that already allow LGBT rights.

Regional IGO's that operate in the Middle East include Rainbow Street, OutRight Action International, Helem, and others. These organizations help ensure that LGBTQ+ individuals who face persecution are able to seek safe asylum in other nations, and provide mental healthcare and support for those living in nations where their identity can cause discrimination and other hardships.

Possible Solution(s)

Many solutions are available to delegates seeking to properly address LGBTQ+ rights in the Middle East and North Africa. The solutions can range from proposing new resolutions, repercussions for countries that still criminalize homosexuality, sanctions against countries, adopting mandatory benchmark systems, economic initiatives, safe immigration efforts,

diplomatic talks between nations, military hard power intervention, humanitarian outreach, severance packages, and much more.

Support for NGO's and IGO's may prove an especially fruitful endeavor, as these are some of the few domestic organizations with roots in the community and in a position to assist LGBTQ+ individuals. However, the continued illegality of their efforts, and strong social norms against LGBTQ+ identity and gender expression, make such efforts difficult, and cooperation with local governments may be a necessary but difficult requirement.

Guiding Questions

1. In what ways can the UN and Human Rights Council decriminalize and protect members of the LGBTQ+ community in countries where they are oppressed?
2. Does your own country have a record of LGBTQ+ human rights violations? Or do they allow such rights already?
3. Is your country actively or not actively working towards allowing or prohibiting LGBTQ+ human rights?
4. What role can NGO's and IGO's play in promoting these rights?
5. How can the United Nations balance local religious and societal norms against LGBTQ+ human rights?

Sources

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