

The background of the slide features a large, light blue watermark of the United Nations Security Council logo. The logo consists of a world map centered on the North Pole, surrounded by a laurel wreath. The text "Security Council" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font.

# Security Council

## President's Letter

Oakland University's Fifth Model United Nations Conference  
March 13th & 14th, 2021

Welcome Delegates to the Oakland University Model United Nations conference! I am excited to be your Chair for the United Nations Security Council. Briefly about us: your Chair, Tanner Trafelet, is majoring in International Relations. Additionally, he is minoring in Spanish Language. He has been fortunate enough to participate in Model U.N. for the past three years. Your co-chair, Hunter Willis, is a fifth year with a double major in Psychology and International Relations with a specialization in foreign affairs and diplomacy. This is his third year doing Model UN and will be his second time co-chairing on the Security Council at OUMUN!

Your dais's chairing style is based on respect, both for your fellow delegates and conference personnel. Respectfully interacting with each other within the scope of the rules will allow for fruitful debate, and especially meaningful Security Council resolutions. Our expectations are that Security Council members will responsibly wield the power that comes with a seat on this council adhere to conference rules, and, of course... have fun! The Security Council is recommended for more experienced delegates, and the chair will take this into consideration. Questions about interpretations of the rules, procedure, and other topics that are germane to the committee are always welcome when introduced in a rule abiding manner.

Your ability to provide a balanced performance is most important to the chair. Showing exemplary ability in research, caucusing, and knowledge of international security matters and procedure will allow for delegates to have the best experience possible during this conference. However, creative thinking and alternative solutions are always welcomed. Adhering to past solutions to security issues may be beneficial in some instances, but the issues you face at this conference will require new and comprehensive solutions to best address the violent conflict and crisis in the international system.

Additionally, delegates are reminded to keep in mind who they are representing and how those nations would act on the world stage. It seems from past experience that when delegates embrace the spirit of the nations they are representing, these committees are not only more fun to be a part of, but everyone will walk away with a more rewarding experience. We look forward to chairing this committee and seeing what idea delegates bring to the table.

Because of the importance and urgency of each topic in the Security Council, each topic will have a set timeframe for discussion. Each topic will be discussed for one session, though delegates may choose to continue with the first topic or start on the second topic in the second committee session. We encourage you to remain on topic in your discussion and be productive in order to reach satisfying conclusions for each topic.

More information about each committee, rules of procedure, and policies for the conference can be found at the [conference website](#).

### **Introduction to the United Nations Security Council**

The United Nations Security Council is ultimately responsible for “the maintenance of international peace and security”, as outlined in article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations.<sup>1</sup> Consisting of 15 nations, the UNSC has 5 permanent members and 10 non-permanent members who are elected to serve by the General Assembly. While all 15 members of the Security Council share equal power while casting votes, the five permanent members hold the ability to veto any resolution with a single vote, these members are; France, The People’s Republic of China, The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States.<sup>2</sup> Typically, the Security Council will discuss topics that could be considered flash points for escalating conflicts. During 2019 the UNSC took up matters such as “The situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela” and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-v/index.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/highlights-2019>

created the “United Nations Mission to support the Hodeidah Agreement”, which supports ceasefire efforts in Yemen.<sup>3</sup> This year at OUMUN, the Security Council will be focusing their efforts in three areas; the situation in Libya, the situation in Venezuela, and India and Pakistan.

### **Libya (Committee Session 1)**

Commonly referred to as the Libyan Crisis, the tensions that have spawned Libya’s current state of conflict began with the Arab Spring Protests of 2011. During the Arab Spring, Libya became enveloped in a visceral civil war, leading to foreign military intervention, and to the overthrow and execution of Libya's leader, Muammar Gaddafi. In the years following Gaddafi’s death, many armed militia groups struggle for control of Libya, resulting in the declaration of the Second Libyan Civil War.<sup>4</sup>

The initial post-Gaddafi government, the Transnational Council, created and relegated authority to the General National Congress (GNC). In June 2014, Libyan voters chose a new body of leadership, the House of Representatives (HoR). Much of the conflict today is centered around the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement<sup>5</sup>, which was endorsed by U.N Security Council Resolution 2259. Many smaller militant factions exist within Libya, seemingly changing allegiances upon whims of convenience, and violently ending most local peace talks in their stages of infancy. The U.N. brokered a ceasefire in 2015,<sup>6</sup> effectively returning control of Libya’s most vital resource, Oil, to the majority government. The creation of a unified

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-v/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cfr.org/interactive/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/civil-war-libya>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ly.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2015/12/517442-libya-un-envoy-urges-endorsement-political-agreement-way-forward-peace-unity>

government, pacification of Libya's smaller militant groups, and stabilization of the Libyan economy are areas of key interest for the United Nations Security Council.

The U.N. and Libya have made significant strides towards creating a unified Libyan government, that will be able to represent all the people of Libya, and stabilize the nation's internal affairs. The 2015 ceasefire, known as the "Libyan Political Agreement," has been a point of much dissension between Libya's warring groups.<sup>7</sup>

Many small militant groups in Libya have risen to prominence in recent years. Even the major coalitions have faced internal fragmentation and division, leading to even more armed groups vying for control of Libya. Using the country's state of disunity to their advantage, many militant Islamist groups have begun operation in Syria. Most notably Anshar al-Sharia, which while officially disbanded in 2017, still use violent tactics to inspire and lead other militant groups in their endeavors to conquer Libya.<sup>8</sup>

The Libyan economy's most important resource, oil, has only recently been stabilized. But going forward, the Libyan economy must diversify if the people of Libya are to be no longer impoverished. While seemingly not a U.N. Security Council matter, Libya presents a unique situation. Nearly all of Libya's resources, meaning human resources, natural resources, factors of production, are underdeveloped, or unjustly used by military groups for the benefit of only the controlling militant group. Identifying vital areas of the Libyan economy, and how to protect them for the betterment of all Libyan people, is a foremost concern of this council.

As of today, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) has been extended to September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021.<sup>9</sup> Libya is expecting more aggression between militant groups as well as

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/north-africa/libya/libyan-political-agreement-time-reset>

<sup>8</sup> <https://charityandsecurity.org/country/libya/>

<sup>9</sup> [https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2542\(2020\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2542(2020))

an increase in reports of human rights violations, with an emphasis on gender based violence.

The UN Security Council continues to uphold sanctions against Libya and requests that member nations not actively intervene in the conflict in any way that will exacerbate the situation or cause further harm.

### **Questions to Consider:**

- ▽ How do the interests of nations intervening in Libya affect the peace-process?
- ▽ What type of peace should be brokered between the factions within Libya?
- ▽ What is the role of UN peacekeepers within Libya?
- ▽ What types of intervention by country are most likely to worsen the situation within Libya?
- ▽ How could all involved parties reach a peaceful solution to the rise of militant groups within Libya?

### **Additional Resources:**

- ▽ [UNSC Resolutions](#)
- ▽ [CIA World Factbook](#)
- ▽ [Human Rights Watch: Libya](#)
- ▽ [Associated Press \(AP\) News](#)

**You will decide whether you want to continue discussing Libya or start on Tigray during the second session (note: you can split the session and finish Libya and then start on Tigray)**

### **Tigray (Committee Session 3)**

In November of 2020, Ethiopian army forces moved into the Tigray province to combat what has been described as a rebellion led by the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), a political party which governs Tigray and whose leaders were, until 2018, prominent members of the Ethiopian federal government. Fighting between the government and TPLF has claimed thousands of lives, and numerous observers have expressed concern about human rights violations and lack of access to the region for the provision of humanitarian aid to the hundreds of thousands of people at risk for starvation. As of January of 2021, some accounts suggest fighting has displaced over two million people, including tens of thousands who have fled to the neighboring Sudan.<sup>10</sup>

Fighting also involves the neighboring country Eritrea, whose war with Ethiopia from 1998 to 2000 formally concluded with a peace agreement in 2018. Eritrea has intervened on behalf of the current Ethiopian government against its former foes, the TPLF. While the Eritrean government officially denies involvement in the conflict, credible reports, including those from the Ethiopian government and the US State Department,<sup>11</sup> confirm the presence of Eritrean troops in Ethiopia. These troops have also been accused of looting, as well as raping and killing civilians, including Eritrean refugees residing in Ethiopia.<sup>12</sup> The TPLF has claimed that it has killed dozens of Eritrean soldiers and has fired rockets into the Eritrean capital. Many fear that other nations will involve themselves in this conflict, especially Sudan which has had recent border clashes with Ethiopian forces over a patch of disputed farmland, Somalia, and The United

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-ethiopia-conflict/over-2-million-people-displaced-by-conflict-in-ethiopia-tigray-region-local-official-idUSKBN29B1N7>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/ethiopia-conflict-eritrea/exclusive-u-s-thinks-eritrea-has-joined-ethiopian-war-diplomats-say-idUSKBN28I1OX>

<sup>12</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/tigray-ethiopia-news-2bdd10888f7717690847ad117f09f2d4>

Arab Emirates which maintains a base in Eritrea. Involvement by these nations will cause the conflict to spread across the horn of Africa.

The breaking point of the conflict, which occurred in September of 2020, was an attack by the TPLF against a government military base and their refusal to postpone regional elections due to COVID-19. However, tensions had been brewing for years, with a key incident occurring in 2018 when there was a change in the national government and leaders from Tigray lost their positions in Addis Ababa, which is the capital city of Ethiopia. Since then, TPLF officials have complained about ethnic-based marginalization from the central government and economic sabotage against their regional government.<sup>13</sup> The Ethiopian government, led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019, has defended its actions as law enforcement meant to discourage domestic mutiny. Although initial reports indicated that the TPLF was well armed,<sup>14</sup> as they claimed they had taken a large stockpile of weapons from government bases, the Ethiopian army enjoys the strategic advantage and has been able to secure much of Tigray, including the regional capital, Mekelle, where the government has disbanded the Tigrayan parliament. As of January of 2021, governmental forces and allied militants had effectively surrounded the TPLF's forces by sealing borders with Eritrea and Sudan, which cut off the TPLF's supply lines. Many of the TPLF's forces have retreated into the Temblem Mountains in central Tigray.<sup>15</sup> Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has already declared victory and has stated that it is only a matter of time before the "junta" (military group, specifically the TPLF in this instance) is captured or killed.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.theafricareport.com/52855/why-ethiopias-conflict-was-avoidable/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-ethiopia-conflict-military-factbox/factbox-the-forces-fighting-in-ethiopias-tigray-conflict-idUKKBN27X19E>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/22/world/africa/ethiopia-tigray-conflict-abiy.htm>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2021/01/23/after-two-months-of-war-tigray-faces-starvation>

The Ethiopian government has invoked national sovereignty to justify its actions in Tigray and deflect criticism. However, observers note that the government remains bound by international

conflict, including deliberate civilians.<sup>17</sup>

blackout has definitive reports, widespread bombing of crops and looting of summary

conventions on prohibitions on targeting of Although a media prevented there are accounts of civilians, burning refugee camps, hospitals, and executions.<sup>18</sup>



Image of the Tigray region with key aspects of the crisis marked

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.theafricareport.com/55135/did-ethiopias-attack-on-tigray-violate-international-laws/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/22/world/africa/ethiopia-tigray-conflict-abiy.html>

The UN has spoken out on the issue, focusing on the humanitarian and human rights issues including concerns that fighting may lead to a massive spike in COVID-19 transmission.<sup>19</sup> The UN has described the humanitarian situation as “dire” and noted difficulties in sending assistance. Furthermore, the UN has noted the disturbing allegations of deliberate targeting of civilians in artillery and air attacks, as well as occurrences of extrajudicial killings. Allegations of human rights abuses include both Ethiopian troops and those from Eritrea. In December of 2020, the UN’s High Commissioner for Human Rights stated that such claims must be investigated and demanded that the Ethiopian government grant UN access to all of Tigray to provide protection for civilians.<sup>20</sup> The six million people living in the Tigray province have limited access to food, clean water, and medical supplies. In January of 2021, the UN noted that over two million people were in need of assistance and that obstacles of bureaucracy and security stood in the way of providing aid.<sup>21</sup> The head of the emergency unit for Doctors Without Borders, Mari Carmen Vinales, said “There is an extreme urgent need — I don’t know what more words in English to use — to rapidly scale up the humanitarian response because the population is dying every day as we speak.”<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, supplying aid has been difficult.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/1/8/un-fears-massive-covid-transmission-in-ethiopia-tigray>

<sup>20</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/12/1080622>

<sup>21</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/01/1082052>

<sup>22</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/ethiopia-united-nations-kenya-ef0b6b2db2994d4c3042cf19f3d92a2a>

UN staff on the ground have been shot at and detained by Ethiopian forces, who have claimed the UN staff had entered forbidden spaces.<sup>23</sup>

The Ethiopian government, while acknowledging the need for food and medical supplies and the looming humanitarian crisis has rejected outside aid, claiming it's outside interference. They have laid all of the blame on the TPLF for the many atrocities, and banned the TPLF from taking part in regional elections which were scheduled for January of 2021, and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has rejected calls for internationally-mediated peace talks.<sup>24</sup>

Notably, the African Union, in a gesture of respect for Ethiopia's sovereignty, has not taken action on this conflict. While several European governments have emphasized the humanitarian and human rights concerns of this conflict, many countries have been supportive of Ethiopia's claim that it is acting to preserve unity and prevent the secession of a rebellious region.

The UN Security Council has yet to take action as well, in part because South Africa, a member in 2020, discouraged them from doing so. However, news outlets have focused in on reasons the UN should take action, including this article published by the World Peace Foundation.<sup>25</sup> The conflict has international repercussions, including refugee outflow; it could grow into a wider regional war; there are acute human rights concerns; the international community, which has been supplying financial assistance, has leverage in the conflict now; and, according to UNSC Resolution 2417, which was adopted in 2018, the UN Secretary General is required to report to the UNSC if any conflict threatens to generate significant food insecurity, which has already been shown to be present in the Tigray region.

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<sup>23</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/africa-ethiopia-united-nations-kenya-f945a81239325a418ee22f123058f39f>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/22/world/africa/ethiopia-tigray-conflict-abiy.html>

<sup>25</sup> <https://sites.tufts.edu/reinventingpeace/2020/12/14/five-reasons-why-the-un-security-council-needs-to-deal-with-the-humanitarian-crisis-in-ethiopia/>

The UNSC needs to address concerns regarding distribution of aid in the conflict zone and investigation of human rights abuses in the face of Ethiopian government opposition, and needs to remain aware of Ethiopian sovereignty so as to not set a dangerous precedent of interference in international affairs. Whether this can be achieved through diplomatic means or will require some force is up to you to decide. One UN official has acknowledged the lack of humanitarian access is part of the Ethiopian government's strategy to end the conflict by starving the rebels and their supporters.<sup>26</sup> There is the possibility that use of peacekeepers is necessary. Can the UNSC facilitate a peaceful resolution between the Ethiopian government, Eritrea, and the TPLF?

### **Questions to Consider:**

- ▽ Has your government responded to this crisis? How?
- ▽ What is your country's stance on human rights as a whole?
- ▽ Does your government have relations with Ethiopia, Eritrea, or other neighboring countries? How might those relationships affect their take on the conflict?
- ▽ How assertive should the UN be in attempting to prevent human rights abuses?
- ▽ Should the UN consider sanctions or indictments for war crimes against the Ethiopian government?
- ▽ Should UN Peacekeepers be deployed to provide humanitarian assistance?
- ▽ How does this crisis affect other conflicts in the region?

### **Resources:**

- ▽ [Ethiopia's Tigray Crisis: What is happening and how you can help?](https://www.apnews.com/article/ethiopia-united-nations-kenya-ef0b6b2db2994d4c3042cf19f3d92a2a)

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<sup>26</sup> <https://apnews.com/article/ethiopia-united-nations-kenya-ef0b6b2db2994d4c3042cf19f3d92a2a>

- ▽ [United Nations Security Council Website](#)
- ▽ [Analysis – Spillover from Tigray crisis adds to pressure on Sudan](#)
- ▽ [Why Is Ethiopia at War with Itself?](#)