

# **Security Council – President’s Letter**

## **Introductions**

Hello delegates and welcome to the 2020 St. Bonaventure University High School Conference! My name is Zayba Chauhdry and I will be your chair for the Security Council. I am a Biology and History double major with a minor in Chemistry and have participated in Model UN since the eighth grade. As your Chair, it is my responsibility to regulate debate and evaluate each of you on your individual performance. Specifically, I will look into how well your delegation represents your country and its’ views on the topics we will be discussing. I hope this conference will increase your knowledge of foreign relations and help further develop your public speaking skills. Most importantly, I want every delegate to enjoy his/her experience. In order to have that, I urge each delegate to respect one another. Please do as much research as you could on your committee, topics and countries. Good luck with your preparation and I can’t wait to have a great conference in March!

## **The Topics:**

### **The India-Pakistan Conflict (Kashmir)**

Kashmir, a valley that borders Pakistan and India, has been a center of conflict between the two nuclear-armed countries since the 1947 partition of British India. The British agreed to split their former colony into two countries: Pakistan, with a Muslim majority, and India, with a Hindu majority. Both nations covet Kashmir and occupy portions of it with military forces.

For decades, an uneasy stalemate has prevailed, broken by occasional military incursions, terrorist attacks and police crackdowns. The administration of the current Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi revoked Article 370 of the Indian constitution, a 70-year-old provision that has given autonomy to the state of Kashmir within India. The government also introduced a bill to strip the region of statehood and divide it into two parts, both under direct control of the central government. Telephone networks and the internet were cut off in the region in the days before the presidential order was announced. Public gatherings were banned, and tens of thousands of troops were sent in. Tourists were told to leave Kashmir under warnings of a terror threats.

Pakistan condemned India’s moves, calling upon President Trump to follow through on an offer he had made to mediate the Kashmir dispute. The UN has long maintained an institutional presence in the contested area, which both countries claim in its entirety, with the areas under separate administration, divided by a so-called Line of Control. The UN Military Observer Group in Indian and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) observes and reports on any ceasefire violations.

The situation further deteriorated in India when the parliament passed The Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) which provided provisions for citizenship for Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian immigrants but excludes “Muslims.” Critics say that the bill makes religion a condition of citizenship and that it confirms suspicion that the government intends

to create a “Hindu India,” and not an India for all citizens regardless of their faiths. The new laws generated plenty of protests and demonstrations that the police violently suppressed. This bill further exacerbates the tensions between India and Pakistan.

### **Questions to Consider:**

- How old is this fight?
- What is your state’s relationship with India or Pakistan? Does your state have any stakes there?
- Has your country tried to end the conflict currently going on in India-Pakistan?
- Who are your allies/enemies within the region?
- Which side of the conflict does your state favor or support? Why?
- How is your country being affected by this?
- What are some terrorist threats to consider?
- Does the UN play any role in this conflict? Do you think the UN should be more active in resolving this conflict?

### **Resources:**

- **The Kashmir conflict: How did it start? Link:**  
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/2019/03/kashmir-conflict-how-did-it-start/>
- **Why Kashmir means so much to both India and Pakistan. Link:**  
<https://www.cnn.com/2016/09/30/asia/kashmir-explainer/index.html>
- **Kashmir: Why India and Pakistan fight over it. Link:**  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/10537286>
- **UN Security Council discusses Kashmir, China urges India and Pakistan to ease tensions. Link:**  
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/08/1044401>
- **Kashmir conflict explained: what took Pakistan and India to the brink of war? Link:**  
<https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/geopolitics/article/2188041/kashmir-conflict-explained-what-brought-pakistan-and-india-air>
- **UN opposes Pakistan's mediation demand, says India, Pak must resolve Kashmir through talks. Link:**  
<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/india-pakistan-united-nations-resolve-kashmir-issue-chief-antonio-guterres-1597978-2019-09-11>

- **Kashmir conflict is not just a border dispute between India and Pakistan. Link:**

<http://theconversation.com/kashmir-conflict-is-not-just-a-border-dispute-between-india-and-pakistan-112824>

### **Protecting Civilians:**

The importance of protecting the safety and lives of civilians during armed conflict should be unanimously agreed upon and it presents an opportunity for cooperation among all nations. The truth remains that in many instances around the world civilians are still endangered because of armed conflicts and foreign / domestic terrorism. There is much that the global community can do in order to better protect civilians and innocent people.

Peacekeepers currently are not in areas they may be needed most, such as in Syria and Myanmar. In Syria, civilians have been in the crossfire of armed conflict for almost a decade, leading to a dire and far-reaching refugee crisis. Similarly in Myanmar, the Muslim minority is currently being systematically oppressed and even ethnically cleansed.

But wars are not the only situation when civilians are targeted. Many countries face the threat of terrorism, both domestic and foreign. It is the responsibility of independent and individual governments to protect their citizens; but multinational cooperation is necessary to defeat foreign terrorism.

The Security Council has already devoted resources toward protecting civilians, (95% of Peacekeepers are allocated towards protecting civilians.) The Security Council has also previously passed resolutions to institute frameworks to address the status of children in armed conflict and conflict-related sexual violence. But such efforts fell short of achieving the desired objectives of protecting civilians in armed conflicts. Peace-keeping forces have done a great job in helping protect civilians but we have to admit that their role needs to be expanded and reinforced in order to do a better job.

### **Questions to Consider:**

- How can the rights and lives of civilians be better protected during armed conflict?
- Should the number/ role of peacekeepers be expanded?
- What policies or practices can be enacted that reduce civilian harm / casualties? Do we need more international agreements?
- Can oversight from the UN be improved? How?
- How can countries be more accountable and transparent about the protection of civilians in armed conflict?
- Is your country working to protect civilians in armed conflict?
- What can your country do better in regard to protecting its civilians and how could you cooperate with other nations to expand international cooperation?

## Resources:

- **Protection of Civilians- United Nations Peacekeeping.** Link: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/protecting-civilians>
- **UN Security Council Resolution 1674.** Link: <https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/blog/document/security-council-resolution-1674-2006-on-protection-of-civilians-in-armed-conflict/>
- **UN Security Council Resolution 1894.** Link: <https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/blog/document/security-council-resolution-1894-2009-on-protection-of-civilians-in-armed-conflict/>
- **Security Council Reports: UN Documents for Protection of Citizens.** Link: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/protection-of-civilians/>
- **Protecting Civilians in Urban Warfare.** Link: <https://www.bmeia.gv.at/en/european-foreign-policy/disarmament/conventional-arms/explosive-weapons-in-populated-areas/protecting-civilians-in-urban-warfare/protecting-civilians-in-urban-warfare/>

## The Syrian Civil War:

For the past 8 years, there has been a civil war going on in Syria with many different groups trying to take control of the country, especially ISIS and many other radical Islamist groups. There have been three main groups trying to take control of Syria: The Syrian army under the leadership of the Syrian president Bashar al-Assad, various rebel groups that claim to be secular and nationalists, and a number of radical Islamist groups, the most infamous of whom are ISIS and al-Nusra Front (al-Qaeda).

The situation over the last 8 years has become very complicated because of all the countries getting involved: Iran, Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Russia, the United States and Hezbollah (a powerful militant group allied with Iran). The Syrian government's key supporters are Russia and Iran, while the United States, Turkey and Saudi Arabia backed the rebels who are trying to remove the Assad regime. France, the United Kingdom and other western countries have also provided various levels of support to what they consider to be "moderate" rebels.

The war led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of civilians and displaced millions, mostly to Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and various European countries. According to the United Nations, at least 6.2 million people have had to leave their homes inside Syria, while another 5.6 million have left to go somewhere else to live.

Recently, Turkey has invaded Syrian territory to fight Kurdish groups that it considers terrorists—almost all other countries do not consider those Kurdish groups terrorist at all—they are actually US allies. The Syrian government seems to be winning the civil war and has already regained it

control on most of its territories. The Syrian government troops have recently renewed a push against the last opposition stronghold, which is in Idlib Province, near the borders with Turkey. And Turkey, which views Syrian Kurdish fighters as an existential threat, has been expanding its military operations there to push the Kurdish fighters farther from the border. The United States maintained some military presence to secure its control of the Syrian oil resources.

The Security Council has been active in discussing the Syrian conflict but without making any serious progress. In 2017, the 15-member body discussed Syria 33 times, the most frequent topic in informal consultations. Since 2012, the Security Council has come up with 23 resolutions on Syria or related to Syria.

### **Questions to Consider**

- How is this civil war affecting other states throughout the world?
- Is it related to the rise of right-wing populism in Europe?
- What is your country's attitude towards the Syrian conflict?
- Has your state done anything to affect what is going on in Syria?
- Is your state directly or indirectly threatened by this conflict?
- What can the Security Council do to try and help the situation going on in Syria?

### **Resources**

- Council on Foreign Relations: The Syrian Civil Report (Various reports). Link: <https://www.cfr.org/syrian-civil-war>
- Council on Foreign Relations: Global Conflict Tracker. Link: <https://www.cfr.org/interactive/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/civil-war-syria>
- Who's Who in Syria's Civil War. Link: <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/whos-who-syrias-civil-war>
- Independent Newspaper: Syrian Conflict. Link: <https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/syria-conflict>
- UN Documents for Syria. Link: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/syria/>