

The Security Council (SC)

Topic 1: Addressing the issue of the Myanmar Civil War

General Overview:

Since Myanmar's (formerly known as Burma) independence from the United Kingdom after 63 years of rule in 1948, there has been constant violence. Culminating in the current Civil War, which started in 2021 and persists until today. From 1962 to 2011, Myanmar was under a military dictatorship; throughout this time. Many ethnic groups were promised a chance to vote on autonomy under the Panglong Agreement in February 1947. However, this promise was broken. This led to decades of Civil wars and coups until 2011. During this time, political dissident Aung San Suu Kyi (Suu Kyi), became a figurehead of Myanmar's democracy movement, was under house arrest for 15 years from 1990 to 2011; for her activism, she won the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize.

2011 marked the start of the military dictatorship sharing power with a civilian government, with the first election resulting in 81% of the populace voting for Suu Ki's party, the New National League for Democracy. 2011-2021 marked a renewed period of hope for democracy, with the formerly imprisoned Suu Ki now one of the country's most powerful people. It improved their international standing, causing many countries to repeal sanctions. President Obama stated in 2015 that Myanmar, "has seen the unprecedented release of political prisoners, new legislation broadening the rights of the political and civic association."

On February 1st, 2021, after the 2020 election, a military junta announced the election as fraudulent, claiming that there had been voter fraud (note that the BBC claims that that claim is baseless). This spurred a *coup d'état*, removing any power in the civilian government. Resulting in Suu Ki and other party officials being deposed and subsequently detained, their whereabouts are not known. This caused a national civil war.

This civil war, mainly between People's Defense Forces (PDF) and the ruling junta. Reports of civilians fleeing to secretive jungle camps for military training to fight against the central government exist. The PDF and other groups also wish to support the National Unity Government - a government consisting of the pre-coup politicians. The United Nations reports that over 20 million people need aid, with 15 million people lacking food. It has caused a refugee crises, with refugees fleeing to neighboring countries. Furthermore, people are being kidnapped to serve in the military.

Topic 2: Addressing the March 23rd movement's impact in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

General Overview:

Since 2022, the March 23rd movement (M23) has been leading an invasion into the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC); in the process, more than 2.5 million people have been displaced, with countless other deaths. However, this did not come without any pretext. The DRC was horrifically controlled by Belgium under King Leopold II for decades for rubber. Rwanda, colonized by the British, and the DRC both experienced instability after gaining independence. For example, in 1960 the assassination of the DRC's first Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba.

The primary justification for this violence came due to the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, a genocide caused by ethnic tensions, where over 800,000 people (mainly Tutsis) were killed by Hutu extremists. Many of the perpetrators fled to the DRC after the fact. The heightened tensions afterwards led to the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) taking power. Then, between 1996 and 2003, the First and Second Congo Wars took place.

In 2012, nine years after the end of the Second Congo War, the M23 movement was formed, beginning a rebellion claiming to be protecting Tutsi interests from the DRC government. The DRC contended that during this time, Rwanda was supporting the M23 movement's logistics and providing weapons, a claim substantiated by a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) report. The M23 is also a part of the Congo River Alliance, a coalition of armed groups and political parties wishing to overthrow the government of the DRC.

In early 2022, the M23 movement began a series of offensives in the North Kivu province, capturing strategic towns such as Bunagana near the Ugandan border. Rwanda continues to deny their direct involvement, claiming that they are focusing on defending themselves from the Hutu Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), responsible for the 1994 genocide. The Rwandan ambassador to the DRC was expelled from the country that same year, Rwanda responded by claiming that the DRC had failed to disarm the genocidal FDLR.

Throughout the years, the UNSC has sent peacekeepers to the region numerous times, especially before, during, and after the Rwandan genocide. Notably, there have been peacekeepers in the DRC for 65 years straight under the banner of MONUSCO (United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo). Currently, the humanitarian disaster is immense: millions have been displaced, thousands killed, and there are thousands of child soldiers.

Topic 3: Addressing the Militarization of the Arctic

General Overview:

Traditionally, the Arctic has been a rare example of a place where international cooperation has been successful. Especially during the Cold War where the United States and the Soviet Union (USSR) both agreed on the importance of protecting the fragile Arctic ecosystem. However, in recent years the Arctic has especially been impacted by climate change, warming at a rate of four times that of the world average. As a result, there has been significant talk of both new potential resources such as fossil fuels and rare metals which are more and more in demand especially Zinc and Cobalt – essential for modern batteries. Moreover, ice has been melting exponentially, with a World Economic Forum report expecting the Arctic to be ice-free by 2040. Opening room for new shipping routes, increasing the potential strategic importance.

Notably, there are only a handful of nations with arctic borders: the United States, Canada, Norway, Denmark (via Greenland), Russia, Finland, Sweden, and Iceland. This has not stopped other nations from trying to gain influence in the region, China despite being relatively far often considers itself a “near-arctic state” and has been working to increase its reach in the region, such as funding and buying mining sites in Greenland.

The Arctic has been central in tensions between countries in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Russia, as since the onset of the Russo-Ukrainian war Russia has begun to militarize rapidly in the Arctic. With researching describing that, “Russia’s Arctic policy has shifted from economic ambitions to military dominance”, China has also aided Russia in this helping create new weaponry for this harsh environment. As for NATO, in 2024 they conducted a four-month-long “Steadfast Defender” exercise near the Russian Arctic Border. Prompting the Russian defense minister Andrei Belousov to state that Russia must be ready to fight NATO within the next decade.

There are also tensions as for land control. Many Arctic countries have successfully applied for an increase in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to gain rights over more lands. Moreover, Russian lawmakers have proposed bills to rename places such as Svalbard – a small northern Norwegian island – to the Pomor islands due to their historical ties. Russia does have a Northern Fleet stationed at the Kola peninsula east of Svalbard. Overall, it is important to manage this volatile region to keep international peace.