



YDMUN'25



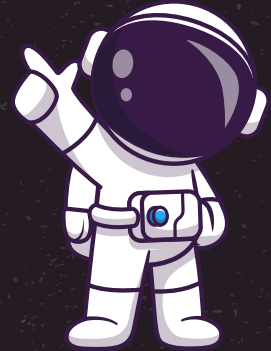
# Study Guide

## UNHCR

*Human Rights in Warfare and Crises Zones Ensuring Accountability and Justice to End Violations, with a Focus on Palestine and Other Affected Regions*

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# Letter from the Secretary General

Dear Esteemed Delegates, Chairs, and Attendees,

It is with great honor and immense excitement that I welcome you all to the second edition of YDMUN! After the success of our inaugural conference, my team and I have been working tirelessly to ensure that this year's edition surpasses expectations and delivers an unforgettable MUN experience.

At YDMUN, our mission is not just to organize another Model United Nations conference, but to ignite a passion for diplomacy, debate, and leadership. We believe MUN should be more than just formal debates—it should be an inspiring journey that leaves every delegate with new perspectives, stronger confidence, and a deep appreciation for the art of negotiation. This is why my team and I are committed to crafting a conference that makes people “fall in love with MUN” whether it's your first time stepping into committee or you're a seasoned delegate.

This year, YDMUN is proud to present eight diverse and engaging committees: 1 General Assembly committees, 4 Special committees, and 3 crisis committees.

Each committee has been carefully designed to challenge, engage, and inspire. Whether you find yourself negotiating in the halls of the United Nations, making tough calls in a historical crisis, or shaping policies in a semi-crisis setting, every moment at YDMUN will be an opportunity to grow as a diplomat and leader.

But beyond the debates, YDMUN is about the people. It is about the connections you will make, the friendships you will build, and the lessons you will carry beyond the conference. My team and I are dedicated to ensuring that every participant walks away with an experience that is not only intellectually enriching but also deeply memorable.

As we embark on this exciting journey together, I encourage you all to speak up, stand out, and make it count. Push boundaries, challenge ideas, and above all, enjoy the process. This is your stage to showcase your diplomacy, strategy, and leadership—make the most of it!

On behalf of my entire YDMUN team, I cannot wait to welcome you all to what promises to be an inspiring and extraordinary edition of our conference.

Let's make YDMUN not just a conference, but an experience to remember!

Sincerely,  
Menna Eraslan  
Secretary General



# Letter from the Under Secretary General & Academic Assistant

My dear delegates,

As your under secretary general, it is a big honour for me to welcome you all to our precious committee which will have debates upon the past and ongoing violations in our highly conflicted world. Me and my beautiful, amazing, lovely, unique, adorable academic assistant Duru Melek have prepared this study guide in order to prepare you. Even though it contains general knowledge informations which most of you probably already knew, it is still recommended to read this study guide and master the subject detailly. Without yapping more, I would like to leave you with our approximately 30-page worksheet. For more informations you can send mails to my e-mail, which is Leyla Çayan, or Melek's.

Good studies,

Leyla Çayan



Dear delegates of UNHCR,

As your academic assistant, I want to welcome you and say that I am very glad to be a part of this great conference. When you start preparing for YDMUN'25, the study guide that me and our very lovely, kind-hearted, supportive, living form of the word 'beauty' Leyla wrote will assist you during your preparations. I want to thank the cutest under-secretary general Leyla and the best of the best secretary general ever lived, Menna, for giving me a chance as an academic assistant in this wonderful conference. Delegates, I want you to know what makes a conference enjoyable is its delegates, so trust yourselves and keep your confident soul alive! If you have any questions you can contact me via [duru.mlk58@gmail.com](mailto:duru.mlk58@gmail.com),

See you in YDMUN'25!

Duru Melek Kılıç



# Conflicts and Violations from History

It is very possible to come across wars and invasions in the recent and distant past where millions of lives were lost. Especially in World War II, killing women and children did not matter a bit. These invasions, which usually target a certain ethnic group or minority, can be based on reasons such as genocide or assimilation, or they are based on territorial gain.

The Human Declaration of Human Rights is made up of 30 articles listing the rights that all human beings are entitled to irrespective of any differences. By simply being a human being born on this Earth, you are entitled to these rights.

Some of the most important rights are:

Article 1 – All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

Article 3 – Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 5 – No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

(For all of the articles:  
<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>)

However, all the rights are important as each of these protect us from harm, discrimination and injustice.

As major events that was totally against humanity in history, we can give The Holocaust, The Rwandan Genocide, The Armenian Genocide, The Atlantic Slave Trade, Japanese War Crimes during WWII for examples. In order to observe the human rights violations in these past events, it is necessary to look at the people who were killed and their numbers. But along those big wars, there are terror activities that also ignore human rights such as 9/11, Munich Olympics Massacre, 15 July 2016...

Such actions are carried out to intimidate civilians by targeting them and although external wars can be prevented or countered, internal problems put more pressure on countries and people, because these actions may be based on dividing the people, starting a civil war or oppressing minority groups. Below are examples of two of the most important events in history.

# The Holocaust

Although 'human rights' within international law for all individuals (irrespective of race, creed, class, ability, gender or sexual orientation) did not exist as a concept, the Holocaust is the ultimate example of what can happen if our human rights are infringed and taken away from us.



A major example of a wartime violation of human rights occurred during World War I when the Imperial German Government caused the deportation from their homes in Belgium and France of a total of approximately 100,000 men, women and children, to be used as forced labour in Germany. This practice was discontinued, and many of the deportees were repatriated when the Imperial German Government responded to neutral indignation at this patent violation of human rights? During World War II, the Nazis relentlessly followed the same practice, but on a far greater scale, with an estimated total of 12,000,000 persons moved from their various home countries to Nazi Germany to perform forced labour, for the most part in munitions factories. The comparatively small percentage of deported persons who survived the extreme ill-treatment that they uniformly received were forced to remain in Germany as virtual slaves until rescued by Allied advances or until the German surrender.

Moreover, some of these concentration camps were basically extermination camps, places that were set up for the sole purpose of exterminating inmates on a wholesale scale, individuals whose only offences were that they were merely suspected of less than 100 percent support of the Nazi government, or they were Jews, or gypsies, or citizens of a foreign nation, even though the latter might have been a German ally. For example, it is known that between four million and six million individuals were exterminated by the use of gas at the camp established by the Nazis in Auschwitz, Poland.

Another Nazi practice which was unquestionably a violation of human rights and which was conducted against both Germans and foreigners, was euthanasia-the killing of persons who were terminally or mentally ill-the individuals whom Hitler called "useless eaters."

A number of the post-World War II trials in Europe involved the use of enemy personnel for purposes of medical experiments, many of which completely lacked any merit and practically all of which resulted in the death of the victims.

## The Rwandan Genocide



In the late XX - early XXI century the bloody massacres of religious, ethnic or national groups took place in South Sudan, Syria, Iraq, and the Central African Republic. The genocide in Rwanda was the most horrific in terms of casualties and unprecedented brutality. Although a significant amount of conventional and other rules of international law have already been established to prevent and combat the crime of genocide, the practice shows that significant problems and difficulties occur considering the bringing perpetrators to justice.

About 85% of Rwandans are Hutus but the Tutsi minority has long dominated the country. In 1959, the Hutus overthrew the Tutsi monarchy and tens of thousands of Tutsis fled to neighbouring countries, including Uganda. In just 100 days in 1994, about 800,000 people were slaughtered in Rwanda by ethnic Hutu extremists. They were targeting members of the minority Tutsi community, as well as their political opponents, irrespective of their ethnic origin.

The consequences of the genocide in Rwanda - a large number of victims mutilated and devastated destinies, the destruction in all spheres of public and state life, an extremely acute economic crisis, as a result famine and revenge, once again show the world all the horrors of genocide and confirm the thesis that genocide can be considered a "crime of crimes." After the genocide in Rwanda, there was an even greater split between the population - the perpetrators and the victims - two opposing camps, the former preferring to avoid responsibility, the latter - being overwhelmed with a longing for revenge. The existing judicial system however was not able to handle a large number of cases.

Within Rwanda, community courts, known as gacaca, were created to speed up the prosecution of hundreds of thousands of genocide suspects awaiting trial. Correspondents say up to 10,000 people died in prison before they could be brought to justice.

# Conflicts and Violations Ongoing

It is heartbreaking that in the 21st century there are still countries fighting for territory or power. Let's examine these invasions, which are not usually reflected in the media, but still known by most people, and have become more intense with the help of advanced technology compared to the past.

## Russia-Ukraine War

The Russia-Ukraine War, which began on February 24, 2022, has fundamentally affected the international order as the biggest systemic rupture after September 11. The war has had a wide range of security perceptions, and has caused many countries to reconsider their global strategies. Russia's strategic mistake, damaging its own cultural geography, and the war being stuck between rapid victory and destruction are the main reasons for the prolongation of the conflict.



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on the second anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine that 31,000 Ukrainian soldiers have lost their lives since the beginning of the war.

## Sudan Civil War

The civil war that broke out in Sudan in 2023 began between the country's two major military forces, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The power struggle between the two sides led to intense clashes across the country. The economic crisis, political uncertainty and regional divisions have further deepened the war, while millions of Sudanese people have been forced to flee their homes. It has also brought the health, food and education infrastructure to the brink of collapse.

Serious human rights violations have occurred during this period. The RSF and its affiliated militias have reportedly committed massacres against civilians, mass rape cases and attempted ethnic cleansing. Arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances and attacks on hospitals and aid workers have also formed the dark side of the war. The international community considers these violations to be "war crimes" and "crimes against humanity" and is calling on the parties to ceasefire and prosecute those responsible.



## Yemen Civil War

The Yemeni Civil War began in 2014 when the Iranian-backed Houthis seized the capital Sanaa and overthrew the government. The conflict has fueled regional power rivalries and created a major humanitarian crisis in Yemen. Starvation, disease and collapse have affected millions of people. According to the United Nations, an estimated 380,000 people have died as a result of the direct and indirect consequences of the war by 2025.

## Uyghur Genocide

On June 26, 2009, two young Uyghurs working in China were lynched and killed in the middle of the street. In protest of this situation, the Chinese government opened fire on the crowd and, in addition to the oppression and assimilation that had already been carried out against the Uyghur people before, an invasion began that left its mark on 2009.



According to the United Nations (UN), the US State Department, Human Rights Watch (HRW) and various human rights organizations, the Chinese government has established around 1,300 concentration camps throughout East Turkestan since 2017. Around 3 million Uyghurs and members of other Turkic minorities are being forcibly detained in these camps.

## Taliban in Afghanistan

Following the Taliban's seizure of power in Afghanistan in 2021, human rights have suffered serious setbacks. By 2023, 80% of girls (approximately 2.5 million students) were denied secondary and high school education. The female labor force participation rate fell from 22% to 6%, and 90% of women working in the public sector were laid off or banned from working. During the same period, journalists were detained and press freedom was restricted. According to UN reports, more than 800 civilians have been subjected to serious human rights violations, including arbitrary detention, torture, or summary executions, since the Taliban took over.

# Palestine Israel Relations

## Ottoman Era of Palestine (1517–1917)

In 1517, the Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim I defeated the Mamluks and conquered Palestine. For the next 400 years, Palestine was ruled as part of the Ottoman provincial system. The Ottomans united Palestine into the Vilayet of Syria, with key administrative centers in Acre, Jerusalem and Nablus. The Ottomans governed through local notables and religious leaders while respecting the autonomy of Christian and Jewish communities under the millet system. Jerusalem gained special religious status as a sanctuary city for Muslims, Christians, and Jews.

Palestine mostly had been the home to a Muslim Arab population, with Christian and Jewish minorities. Rural life centered around farms and local markets, while cities like Jerusalem, Hebron, and Gaza served as trade and religious provinces. In the 19th century, reforms known as the Tanzimat aimed to modernize the empire, improve taxation, and centralize authority. These reforms reached Palestine, altering land ownership laws and administrative boundaries. New foreign interests such as European powers and Christian missionary groups began to influence local affairs.

By the late 1800s, Zionist immigration from Europe began. Jews fleeing pogroms (pogrom is a violent riot or organized massacre against a particular ethnic or religious group, especially Jews.) and antisemitism (hostility, prejudice, or discrimination against Jews) purchased land and settled in parts of Palestine, especially in areas like Jaffa, Haifa, and the Jezreel Valley. Though initially small in scale, this immigration raised tensions between local Arab populations and the new settlers.

The weakening of the Ottoman Empire, growing nationalist movements, and European colonial ambitions set the stage for Palestine's modern political transformation. World War I, becoming the Ottoman Empire's final chapter, and by 1917, the British had taken control of Palestine, ending four centuries of Ottoman rule.

## The English Mandate Era of Palestine (1917-1947)

Britain took control of the area known as Palestine in World War I, due to the Ottoman Empire, which had ruled Palestine for 400 years, was defeated by the opposing powers. British forces entered Jerusalem in 1917, and shortly afterward, the Balfour Declaration which was a public pledge by Britain in 1917 declaring its aim to establish “a national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine was issued. As the outcome of this declaration, Jewish immigration to Palestine increased sharply and Jewish migrants settled in growing numbers. Their goal was to establish a national homeland through the purchase of land and the creation of self-sufficient communities.

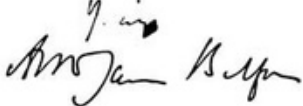
Foreign Office,  
November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet

"His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country"

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.



At the same time, the Arab Palestinian population began to oppose British policy and Jewish immigration, fearing displacement and the loss of political control in their own land. Arabs, who made up the majority of the population, felt betrayed by British promises of self-rule and grew increasingly resistant to Zionism.

As the situation progressed, tension, violence and unrest kept rising. The riots appeared in 1920 and 1921 in Jerusalem and Jaffa, the 1929 Hebron Massacre resulted in deaths of numerous Jews. The most significant unrest unfolded in the Arab Revolt (1936–1939). This large-scale uprising against British rule and Jewish immigration involved strikes, attacks on bases, and guerrilla warfare. Britain crushed the revolt harshly, arresting thousands of executing Arab leaders.

This revolt started to shape into a milestone, as Palestinian political leadership was weakened, and Jewish defense organizations like the Haganah grew stronger and more organized. As a result of the growing violence, the British tried several different strategies such as The Peel Commission (1937) and The White Paper (1939).

Basically The Peel Commission proposed a partition plan to divide Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states. Jews were willing to consider it; Arabs rejected it completely while The White Paper reversed earlier policies, limiting Jewish immigration to 75,000 over five years and promising independence for Palestine within 10 years. This move angered the Zionist movement, especially as Jews faced growing danger in Nazi Europe. However despite these shifts, Britain struggled to keep in control as both communities became increasingly hostile.

During World War II, both Jews and Arabs in Palestine contributed to the allied war effort; however, the underlying tensions remained unresolved.

After the war, the horrors of the Holocaust increased international sympathy for the Jewish cause. Jewish survivors of Nazi persecution sought to migrate to Palestine, but British immigration limits remained in place. Zionist underground groups, for instance Irgun and Lehi, began attacking British military and administrative targets, including the bombing of the King David Hotel in 1946.

Exhausted by war, under growing international pressure, and unable to manage increasing violence, Britain turned the problem over to the United Nations in 1947.

The United Nations proposed a partition plan in 1947, recommending the division of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states (close to the Peel Commission offer) with Jerusalem under international administration. The Jewish leadership accepted the plan, but the Arab leadership and neighboring Arab countries rejected it, viewing it as unfair and a violation of Palestinian rights.

As conflict broke out between Jewish and Arab communities, Britain withdrew from Palestine in May 1948, ending the mandate.

(For further information you can look up to:

[Part I \(1917-1947\) - Question of Palestine](#)

## Arab-Israeli War and the Division of Palestine (1948)

On May 14, 1948, the Jewish leadership declared the independence of the State of Israel. As a consequence of this declaration, the first Arab-Israeli War started, especially when the Arabs launched an air attack on Tel Aviv, which the Israelis resisted and five Arab nations (Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon) rebelled in the former Palestinian Mandate.

Even though the United States offered de facto recognition of the Israeli Provisional Government, during the war the United States laid an arms embargo on two fighting sides of the war.

On 29th of November, 1947, the Partition Resolution was acknowledged by the United Nations General Assembly. In this resolution, dividing Britain's former Palestinian Mandate into two Arab-Israeli states was offered. Also the Jerusalem remaining under international control ensured by the United Nations clause was a catch in the resolution. As expected, Palestinians refused to recognise this pact offered by the United Nations, defending that the pact is unjust.

Saudi Arabia sent a unit that fought under Egyptian command. British armed forces from Transjordan intervened in the conflict after some time, but only in areas that had been recognised as a part of the Arab state under the United Nations Partition Plan and the corpus separatum of Jerusalem.

After hard early fighting, Israeli forces, now under joint command, were able to gain the offensive.

Fighting continued in 1949. Under separate agreements between Israel and the states nearby Egypt, Lebanon, Transjordan, and Syria, agreed on armistice lines. Israel gained some territory formerly granted to Palestinian Arabs under the United Nations resolution in 1947. Egypt and Jordan retained control over the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. These armistice lines held until 1967.

After Israel won the first Arab-Israeli war, over 700,000 Palestinians were displaced or fled, in what Palestinians call the Nakba (catastrophe).

### The Suez Crisis (1956)

The Suez Crisis of 1956 happened when Egypt's leader, Gamal Abdel Nasser, took control of the Suez Canal, which had been run by Britain and France. This aggravated both countries, so they made a secret plan with Israel, who also had problems with Egypt.

Israel invaded Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, and Britain and France joined in, saying they wanted to protect the canal.



Even though they won on the battlefield, the United States and the Soviet Union pressured them to stop and leave. In the end, Egypt kept the canal, and a United Nations peacekeeping force was sent to the area. The crisis showed that Britain and France were no longer the world's main powers, and it made Nasser a hero in the Arab world.

Even though Israel withdrew from Sinai in 1957, the Suez Crisis increased Arab-Israeli hostility and planted seeds for future confrontation.



## The Six-Day War (1967)

The Six-Day War, which took place in June 1967, began after rising tensions between Israel and its Arab neighbors. In May, Egypt asked UN peacekeepers to leave the Sinai Peninsula and moved its army near Israel's border.



Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser also closed the Straits of Tiran, cutting off Israel's access to the Red Sea as a move Israel saw as an act of war. Meanwhile, Jordan and Syria formed military alliances with Egypt, and Arab leaders made threats against Israel's existence.

On June 5, Israel launched a preemptive air strike, destroying most of Egypt's air force and starting the war. Within just six days, Israel defeated Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, and captured large territories:

- the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt,
- the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan,
- the Golan Heights from Syria.

As a result, Israel's land size tripled, reshaping the political map of the Middle East and intensifying the Israeli-Arab conflict for decades to come.

## Consequences of the Six-Day War

- Over 300,000 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza became displaced or refugees. - Israel now controlled millions of Palestinians under military occupation. -Jerusalem was unified under Israeli control, including the Old City and holy sites. -Arab states were humiliated, but refused to recognize or negotiate with Israel, as declared in the Khartoum Resolution (1967): "No peace, no recognition, no negotiations." -The war laid the foundation for ongoing occupation, settlement expansion, and future conflicts.
- This also led to UN Security Council Resolution 242, calling for Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories in exchange for peace.

# Conflicts Between Israel and Palestine in Today's World

The conflict between Israel and Palestine remains one of the most deeply rooted and complex issues in the modern world. While the struggle has historical roots going back over a century, tensions continue today with cycles of violence, political deadlock, and humanitarian crises, especially in Gaza and the West Bank.

Gaza, controlled by the Palestinian group Hamas, has been under a strict blockade by Israel (and Egypt) since 2007. This has led to severe poverty, shortages of food, water, electricity, and medical supplies, creating a major humanitarian crisis. Both sides claim Jerusalem as their capital, and clashes often occur around Al-Aqsa Mosque, a deeply sacred site for Muslims, located on a site also sacred to Jews (Temple Mount).

## Political Division Among Palestinians

### The 2007 Split

After winning the 2006 Palestinian legislative elections, Hamas and Fatah could not agree on how to share power. As a result tensions escalated into violent clashes in 2007. Hamas seized full control of Gaza, while Fatah maintained authority in the West Bank. Since then, Palestinians have lived under two separate governments, each with its own security forces, institutions, and policies.

	Hamas	Fatah
Founded in	1987 (First Intifada)	1959 by Yasser Arafat
Leadership	labeled a terrorist organization by Israel, the U.S., and the EU (though not by all countries).	Part of the Palestinian Authority (PA), now is led by Mahmoud Abbas.
Political Base	Gaza Strip	West Bank
Ideology	refusing to recognise Israel and supporting armed struggle.	Secular nationalism, supports a two-state solution
International Relations	Considered as an Islamist militant group	Generally accepted by Europe and many middle east countries.

## Gaza War (2021)

The Gaza War of 2021, also known as the May 2021 conflict, was a violent tension between Israel and Hamas. The conflict lasted for 11 days, from May 10 to May 21, 2021, and resulted in significant loss of life and destruction, mainly in Gaza.

The immediate trigger for the war was rising tensions in Jerusalem, particularly around the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound. There were confrontations between Palestinian protesters and Israeli security forces during the Holy Month of Ramadan, especially in the area of Sheikh Jarrah.

As violence escalated in Jerusalem, Hamas issued an ultimatum to Israel, demanding that Israeli forces withdraw from Al-Aqsa and Sheikh Jarrah. When Israel did not comply, Hamas launched rocket attacks at Israeli cities, including Jerusalem, on May 10, marking the beginning of the conflict. In response to Hamas rocket fire, Israel launched intense airstrikes targeting Hamas military infrastructure in Gaza. The violence escalated rapidly, leading to widespread destruction and casualties on both sides.

## The Ongoing Israel-Hamas Conflict (2023-2024)

Hamas launched a surprise large-scale attack on Israel in October 2023, firing thousands of rockets and infiltrating southern Israel by land, sea, and air. This attack was one of the most devastating since the 2006 Lebanon War, resulting in the deaths of over 1,000 Israelis and large-scale damage to Israeli towns.

Israel launched airstrikes and ground operations in Gaza, targeting Hamas military infrastructure, including rocket launchers, weapons caches, and tunnels. Thousands of Palestinians are killed, and many more are injured. The destruction of buildings led to a major humanitarian crisis in Gaza, where people face shortages of food, water, and medical supplies.

The blockade on Gaza (imposed by Israel and Egypt) continues to restrict the flow of essential goods, including medical supplies, construction materials, and food. International aid efforts have been hindered by the political and security situation, and organizations like the United Nations have called for unrestricted humanitarian access to Gaza.

## International Involvement and Reactions

Many countries and organizations, including the United Nations, European Union, and Arab League, have called for an immediate ceasefire and a halt to the violence.

Diplomatic efforts continue, with countries like Egypt, Qatar, and Turkey working to mediate between Israel and Hamas. However, these efforts have not resulted in long-lasting peace. The United States continues to provide military aid and diplomatic support to Israel, reaffirming Israel's right to self-defense.

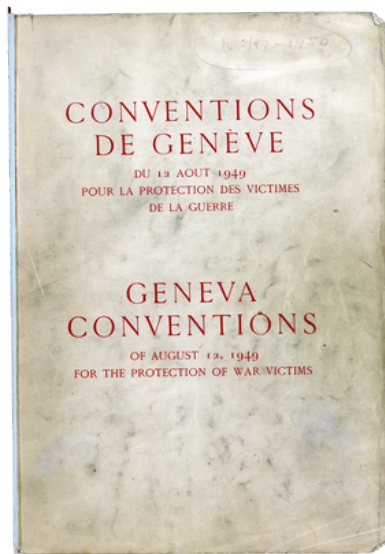
## Past Attempts to Stop the Violation of Human Rights

### Early Humanitarian Norms (Pre-19th Century)

Before formal international laws were established, many civilizations and religious traditions developed their own customs aimed at limiting the suffering of civilians during times of war. In ancient societies such as those of Greece, Rome, China, and the Islamic Caliphates, certain codes of conduct guided warriors to avoid harming non-combatants; especially women, children, and the elderly.

Religious teachings played a significant role in shaping these norms—texts like the Bible, Quran, and Hindu scriptures included principles encouraging mercy, compassion, and the protection of innocents during conflict.

For instance, Islamic law (Sharia) emphasized the humane treatment of prisoners and the prohibition of killing women and children in battle. Similarly, Christian just war theory, developed by theologians, stressed the importance of proportionality and discrimination between combatants and civilians.



## The Geneva Conventions (1864–Present)

The Geneva Conventions are the series of international treaties and protocols that form the cornerstone of modern international humanitarian law, aimed at protecting individuals who are not participating in hostilities during any kind of armed conflict.

The most significant development came after World War II with the adoption of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949.

### The First Geneva Convention (1864)

The first convention was adopted in 1864, inspired by the work of Henry Dunant who witnessed the suffering of wounded soldiers at the Battle of Solferino in 1859. Dunant was moved by the lack of medical care for the injured. Later then, Dunant advocated for the creation of neutral and impartial organizations to care for them, which led to the founding of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and eventually the convention itself. It focused on the treatment of wounded soldiers on the battlefield. Over time, the conventions were expanded to address broader aspects of war.



The treaty was signed by 12 European states and the First Geneva Convention laid the foundation for a broader framework of international humanitarian law that would evolve to protect more categories of people in armed conflicts.

### The Second Geneva Convention (1906, revised in 1949)

The Second Geneva Convention was adopted in 1906 and later significantly revised in 1949 to expand protections under international humanitarian law. This convention was created to extend the principles of the First Geneva Convention—originally focused on land warfare—to naval warfare.



It ensures that wounded, sick, and injured military personnel at sea are respected and protected in times of armed conflict. The convention requires that they must be collected and cared for, regardless of their nationality. It also protects hospital ships, medical personnel, and equipment used at sea, requiring them to be clearly marked (usually with the Red Cross) and treated as neutral. The 1949 revision aligned the Second Convention more closely with the expanded humanitarian standards established after World War II. It remains a crucial legal safeguard for naval forces and victims of maritime warfare.

(If you wish to read the whole agreement you can look up to:

<https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%2075/volume-75-I-971-Englis h.pdf>)

### The Third Geneva Convention (1949)

The Third Geneva Convention, adopted in 1949, focuses on the treatment of prisoners of war during armed conflict. It was developed in response to the mistreatment of prisoners of wars during World War II and replaced earlier agreements from 1929. This convention sets out comprehensive rules for the humane treatment of captured prisoners of war, ensuring they are protected from torture and humiliating treatment. It establishes that prisoners of wars must be treated with dignity, provided with adequate food, shelter, and medical care, and allowed to communicate with their families. Interrogations are strictly limited, and prisoners cannot be forced to give more than their name, rank, serial number, and date of birth. The convention also outlines rights to fair trials, access to religious services, and the right to receive aid from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

(If you wish to read the whole agreement you can look up to:

[https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/II/IImlp/GC\\_1949-III/GC\\_1949-III.pdf](https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/II/IImlp/GC_1949-III/GC_1949-III.pdf))

### The Fourth Geneva Convention (1949)

The Fourth Geneva Convention, adopted in the aftermath of World War II, 1949, is dedicated to protect the civilians during times of war. This was a major advancement in international humanitarian law, recognizing that civilians often suffer the most during armed conflicts. It prohibits acts like torture, taking hostages and attacks on civilian property. Importantly, it also ensures that their rights are respected and that they are not forcibly transferred or deported. The convention grants the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) the right to provide humanitarian aid and monitor the treatment of civilians.

(If you wish to read the whole agreement you can look up to:

[https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/II/IImlp/GC\\_1949-IV/GC\\_1949-IV.pdf](https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/II/IImlp/GC_1949-IV/GC_1949-IV.pdf))

## The Hague Conventions (1899 & 1907):

The Hague Conventions are focusing on the conduct of hostilities and the rights of both combatants and civilians during armed conflict. Initiated by Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, the First Hague Conference in 1899 aimed to promote peace and reduce the horrors of war through diplomacy and took place in the Hague, the Netherlands. It addressed the humane treatment of prisoners of war, also the usage of projectiles that disperse asphyxiating gas and the usage of bullets that expand or flatten easily in the human body was prohibited with this the first Hague Convention.

The Second Hague Conference in 1907 expanded and updated these rules, including new regulations on naval warfare, also expanded to 44 participating states the rights and duties of neutral states, and the conduct of occupying forces. These conventions also established the Permanent Court of Arbitration to help peacefully resolve international disputes.

● Feature	● 1899 Hague Convention	● 1907 Hague Convention
● Historical Context	● First major attempt at war regulation	● Follow-up and expansion of 1899
● Number of Conventions	● 3 main conventions + declarations	● 13 conventions
● Focus	● Land warfare and peace mechanisms	● Broader, included naval warfare
● Naval Warfare	● Not addressed	● Major focus area
● Peaceful Dispute Resolution	● Established Permanent Court of Arbitration	● Expanded but no major new mechanisms
● Participation	● 26 countries	● 44 countries

# Establishment of the United Nations

With the primary aim of preventing future global conflicts and fostering international peace and cooperation, The United Nations (UN) was established in April 1945, after the ending of World War II.

Representatives from 50 countries Joined the United Nations Conference on International Organization in San Francisco to draft the UN Charter. The Charter outlined the purposes, structure, and principles of the new organization, including respect for human rights, the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and the promotion of social and economic development. The UN officially came into existence on October 24, 1945, after the Charter was ratified by the majority of signatories, including the five permanent members of the Security Council: the United States, United Kingdom, Soviet Union (now Russia), China, and France.

Due to its job of ensuring world peace, we can take the establishment of the United Nations as an attempt to prevent the violation of human rights in any kind of adverse occasions such as armed conflicts.

## International Criminal Law (ICL)

International Criminal Law is a branch of public international law that focuses on prosecuting individuals—not states—for serious crimes that affect the global community. These crimes include genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and the crime of aggression. The main goal of ICL is to ensure that individuals, including political and military leaders, are held accountable for grave violations of international norms, regardless of their nationality or position.

ICL began to take shape after World War II with the Nuremberg and Tokyo Tribunals, where leaders of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan were tried for atrocities committed during the war.

A major advancement in ICL came with the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2002, based on the Rome Statute. International criminal law emphasizes the principles of individual criminal responsibility, fair trial rights, and the idea that no one is above the law. It plays a critical role in promoting justice, deterring future atrocities, and supporting victims by recognizing their suffering on a global scale.

## International Human Rights Law (IHRL)

International Human Rights Law is a body of international rules and standards that protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of all human beings, regardless of nationality, race, religion, gender, or other status. Its main purpose is to ensure that every person is treated with dignity, equality, and respect, both in times of peace and conflict.

The foundation of modern human rights law was also laid after World War II, as a response to the atrocities committed during the conflict. In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), a milestone document that outlined key civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights.

## Chemical Weapons Convention (1993)

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is a milestone in an international treaty that outlawed the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons. Opened for signature in 1993 and entering into force in 1997, the CWC represents one of the most comprehensive disarmament agreements in history. It is administered by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), based in The Hague. The convention obliges member states to destroy existing chemical weapons stockpiles and production facilities under international verification, and to refrain from engaging in any activities related to chemical warfare. It also includes strong inspection and compliance mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability.

## Ottawa Treaty (1997)

The Ottawa Treaty, is an international agreement adopted in 1997 that aims to eliminate the use, stockpiling, production, and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. These weapons, often left behind long after conflicts ended, have caused devastating injuries and deaths to civilians. The treaty was the result of a global campaign led by civil society organizations, notably the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), which won the Nobel Peace Prize in the same year. Signatory states commit to destroy existing stockpiles, clear mined areas, and provide assistance to landmine victims.

## Convention on Cluster Munitions (2008)

The Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) is an international treaty adopted in 2008 that prohibits the use, production, transfer, and stockpiling of weapons that release multiple small bomblets over a wide area. These ammos are especially dangerous because many of the ammos fail to explode on impact, posing long-term threats to civilians even decades after the conflict has ended. The CCM was inspired by growing global concern over the consequences of cluster bombs, especially their usage in civilian areas. The treaty also obligated member states to clear contaminated areas, destroy stockpiles, and assist victims and affected communities. It entered into force on August 1, 2010, and has been ratified by over 110 countries.

## International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is a neutral, independent, and impartial humanitarian organization founded in 1863 in Geneva, Switzerland. It was established by Henry Dunant, whose experiences witnessing the suffering of wounded soldiers at the Battle of Solferino inspired a global movement to protect and assist victims of war. The ICRC is the guardian of international humanitarian law (IHL), particularly the Geneva Conventions, and plays a central role in promoting and monitoring compliance with the laws of armed conflicts.

## Establishment of UN Human Rights Council (2006)

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) was established in 2006, replacing the former UN Commission on Human Rights, with the aim of strengthening the global human rights framework and addressing concerns more effectively.

The UNHRC addresses violations and abuses of human rights through investigation, and recommendations. One of its most important tools is the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), which regularly evaluates the human rights records of all UN member states. The Council can also mandate independent experts and fact-finding missions to examine specific issues or situations, such as discrimination, freedom of expression, or violations in conflict zones.



## Optional Protocol (2000)

The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, adopted in 2000, is a significant international legal instrument that aims to protect children from being recruited and used in armed conflicts. While the original Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted in 1989.

The Protocol reflects the global consensus that children under 18 should not be involved in war, and it obliges states to take legal measures to prevent such recruitment, criminalize violations, and demobilize and reintegrate child soldiers.

## Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989, is the most comprehensive international treaty dedicated to the rights and well-being of children. The Convention obliges states to protect children from abuse, exploitation, and neglect, ensure their access to education and healthcare regardless of race, religion, gender, or background. The CRC is built on four core principles: non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, the right to life, survival and development, and respect for the views of the child.

The CRC has been ratified by nearly every country in the world—except the United States. It remains as a cornerstone of international human rights law and continues to guide global efforts to ensure a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment for all children.

## Questions to be Answered

- How have war ethics changed from past to present? What other measures can be taken
- to deal with human rights violations in the international arena? What new sanctions should be applied against crimes that violate human rights in today's world? How can the
- Palestinian issue and other similar conflicts be more publicized in order to raise awareness? How can the aid be provided to civilians who are being oppressed as foreign
- countries and how can this be ensured that it also may be done by foreign nations? What responsibilities do the rich and strong countries have in promoting help during those
- conflicts? How can the media be more useful and effective in securing the human rights? How can the inclusion of peace and the development of human rights in the educational
- systems of countries be realized and how can it contribute to the long-term guarantee of human rights?
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Government	Percentage
Current government	100%
Previous government	0%

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images <https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.history.com%2Ftopics%2Fcold-war%2Fsuez-crisis&psig=AOvVaw2AVWnNg7FXyWajpfDpHrIi&ust=1744486622661000&source=images&cd=vfe&opi=89978449&ved=0CBQQjRxqFwoTCQje3bzd0IwDFQAAAAAdAAAAABAE>  
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