NHSMUN 50

National High School Model United Nations

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to NHSMUN 2024! My name is David Monterrey, and I'll be your Assistant Director for the Legal Committee during Session I of the conference. I have been a part of Model United Nations (MUN) since middle school, and I have continued to participate in MUN to this day.

I'm a Costarican-Nicaraguan raised in Costa Rica. I'm finishing my Associate's Degree in Cybersecurity and aiming to start my degree in International Relations in September 2024. I'm a huge hiking fan, and I love traveling the world. However, the only thing I love more than these activities is my dog, Andak.

Remember that it's completely normal to feel nervous at some point during the conference, especially if this is your first MUN conference. It's okay to feel that way! We have all been in that position at some point. I hope this is an exciting experience for all of you. It is our honor to have you as our delegates, and we wish you good luck in this NHSMUN 2024!

We can't wait to see you soon and finally meet!

Cheers,

David Monterrey

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Legal Assistant Director

Session I

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Dear Delegates,

I am beyond excited to welcome you to Legal for NHSMUN 2024! My name is Julia Stephen, and I will be your Assistant Director alongside David Monterrey throughout Session I of the conference. Although this is my first year on staff, I have attended NHSMUN twice as a delegate in the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund in 2021 and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization in 2023.

I was born and raised in Lima, Peru, and graduated high school last November. I am taking a gap semester before starting university abroad in August, where I plan to major in Biological Engineering.

Aside from Model UN, my hobbies include making handcrafted soap (I make it from scratch in my home lab.), basketball, reading fiction novels, cooking, listening to cast recordings of Broadway Musicals (I'm a huge Hamilton fan!), and spending time with my dog Joe (He is a Jack Russel, and I love him so much!).

The Legal Committee is one of the largest at NHSMUN, and it may be daunting to make speeches in front of many people. Having been there before, I can best advise you to go for it. After you deliver your first speech, the courage for the following speeches will come easily. The atmosphere is incredibly welcoming, and remember that all dais members are here to support you and want to hear the ideas you bring to the committee. Above all, I hope you take this opportunity to learn, grow, and have fun. I can't wait to meet you all in March!

Yours in diplomacy,

Julia Stephen

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Legal Assistant Director

Session I

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to NHSMUN 2024! My name is Ana Sofía Juárez, and I will be your Assistant Director for the Legal committee during Session II. I started doing Model UN in sixth grade and have been in love with it ever since. Even though this is my first time as a staffer, it is not my first time attending NHSMUN. I first participated in NHSMUN in 2019, representing Morocco in the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

A little bit about me: I am a sophomore in college majoring in law (yay legal!) at Universidad de Monterrey, and I am from Monterrey, Mexico. My favorite subjects in school right now are labor law and criminal law. I find them fascinating!

Like everyone else, I have hobbies apart from Model UN and school. One of the things that I enjoy is watching TV series. I just finished a show called *Jury Duty*, (it's on Amazon Prime), and it was enjoyable! I highly recommend it, but my all-time favorite show is *Modern Family*. I'm also a huge fan girl! I love Taylor Swift, Harry Styles, and 5 Seconds of Summer. On top of that, I like Formula One (forza Ferrari!!!), so feel free to reach out if you want to talk about it!

Finally, I just want to say that even if you feel nervous, don't worry. I can assure you that you are not the only one. I know that speaking in front of a large crowd can be overwhelming, but as I said, don't worry! Breathe, and remember that everything will be okay. You are not alone. Try to imagine how proud you'll feel when you're done. Remember that winning is just a side effect of hard work and dedication. Never give up, and always give it your best! I cannot wait to meet you all!

Best,

Ana Sofía Juárez

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Legal Assistant Director

Session II

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to NHSMUN 2024! My name is Omar Abdallah, and I will be your Assistant Director for Legal in Session II. I am from Illinois–specifically, a small suburb southwest of Chicago called Orland Park, IL. My Model UN journey began in high school when I joined the organization and became attached to international politics. Since the beginning, I have chaired multiple conferences and cannot wait to continue that experience with you all.

I am a sophomore at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, studying accounting and Mandarin. I plan to attend law school sometime after joining the workforce and becoming a corporate or international lawyer.

Outside of Model UN and school, I enjoy listening to music. My top five artists are J Cole, Adele, Kanye, Imagine Dragons, and Eminem. I prefer watching TV with my roommates or reading in my free time. My show recommendations include *Dance Moms*, *Lupin*, *Modern Family*, *Working Moms*, *New Girl*, and *Grace and Frankie*. If you want any book recommendations, let me know. I would be more than happy to share!

As a reminder, in my eyes, the point of this conference is to have fun and go home satisfied with everything you have accomplished. Whether talking to someone new or speaking twice in each session, as long as you take something away from the conference, I would consider it a success. When I did Model UN, I always did the best at the conferences where I had the most fun, so please take my advice. Finally, congratulations on making it here. Writing a position paper is not easy, nor is taking time out of your schedule to research the topic and attend the conference. I know that you committed a lot of time to preparing. So, for that, thank you. I cannot wait to see everyone on the committee. In the meantime, feel free to reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

Best,

Omar Abdallah

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Legal Assistant Director

Session II

TOPIC A:

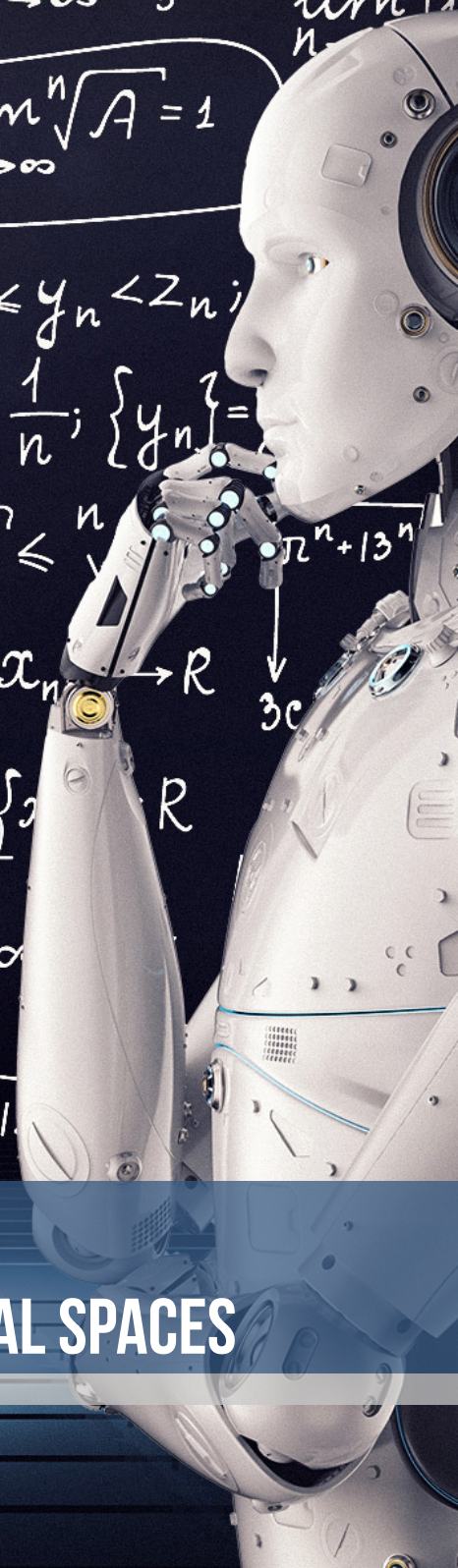# THE HUMAN RIGHT TO PRIVACY IN DIGITAL SPACES

Introduction

In the digital age, technology changes daily. As a result, the topic of the human right to privacy in digital spaces is also changing. New information, new problems, and law changes affect how privacy is discussed. This can include anything from the improper use of facial recognition to online violence against women. This Update Paper will explore these recent developments in international law surrounding privacy and technology.

Privacy is something that affects every part of human life. The cases in this Update Paper are small parts of more significant challenges. Delegates of the Legal Committee should consider how they can lead the committee in developing solutions to these problems based on changing or creating international laws. They should keep in mind the scope of the Legal Committee as well. As a General Assembly Committee, the Legal Committee must recommend treaties and agreements to other UN bodies and international organizations. For example, if the Legal Committee is concerned with the use of digital surveillance as a violation of human rights, it may recommend that the UN Human Rights Council explore new regulations for the use of surveillance technology.

Artificial Intelligence's Use in Targeting Civilians

The fast growth and efficiency of artificial intelligence (AI) is impacting different worldwide events. This also affects the right to privacy and several other human rights. In the wrong hands, AI tools could lead to negative consequences. Regulation is one way to ensure AI tools cannot be used for harmful purposes. A clear example of poor AI regulation is the

"Israel-Palestine" conflict. Specifically, this can be seen in most attacks that began in October 2023 in the Gaza Strip.[1]

The history of violence in Palestine involves long-standing political and territorial disputes between Israel and the Palestinian people. The region of Gaza has been a hotspot of this violence throughout time, with repeated cycles of violence and ceasefire attempts. However, violence has largely escalated since the rise of the Palestinian militant group Hamas in 2006, which acts as the de-facto government of Gaza. It has been escalated further through the total blockade of the region by Israel since 2007.[2] In 2007, Israel has had tight control of Gazans' freedom of movement as well as their access to healthcare, water, and electricity.[3] This tight control extends to its intense surveillance of the region.[4] This system features an extensive border fence with cameras, remote sensors, and automated machine guns. Another feature is Israel's automated drones, which can track and follow Gazans. Israel also holds a registry of Gazan Palestinians' biometric data, or the unique characteristics of someone's body, which allows them to be identified.[5] They use this information to identify Palestinians in public without needing to check IDs.[6] Additionally, Israel closely watches anything Palestinians say online and can raid houses without any notice at any time.[7] All surveillance of Gaza and Palestinians, more broadly, is overseen by the Israeli military, known as the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF).

For years, the IDF has been working on strengthening the technologies it uses to surveil and conduct war. However, until recently, the exact capabilities that Israel has had have not been publicly known. The IDF has claimed that it has made important technological advancements in AI for years.[8] In May 2021, Israel claimed to have used AI to fight in a war for the first time.[9] The IDF's AI capabilities claims have been

1 Harry Davies, Bethan McKernan, and Dan Sabbagh, "'The Gospel': How Israel Uses AI to Select Bombing Targets in Gaza," *The Guardian*, December 1, 2023, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/dec/01/the-gospel-how-israel-uses-ai-to-select-bombing-targets.
2 Adam Zeidan, "Gaza Strip | Definition, History, Facts, & Map," Britannica, January 17, 2024, https://www.britannica.com/place/Gaza-Strip.
3 "The Gaza Strip | The Humanitarian Impact of 15 Years of Blockade," UNICEF Middle East and North Africa, June 2022, https://www.unicef.org/mena/documents/gaza-strip-humanitarian-impact-15-years-blockade-june-2022.
4 Sophia Goodfriend, "Israel's High-Tech Surveillance Was Never Going to Bring Peace," *Foreign Policy*, October 30, 2023, https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/10/30/israel-palestine-gaza-hamas-war-idf-high-tech-surveillance/.
5 Goodfriend, "Israel's High-Tech."
6 Mona Shtaya, "Nowhere to Hide: The Impact of Israel's Digital Surveillance Regime on the Palestinians," Middle East Institute, April 27, 2022, https://www.mei.edu/publications/nowhere-hide-impact-israels-digital-surveillance-regime-palestinians.
7 Shtaya, "Nowhere to Hide."
8 Davies, Mckernan, and Sabbagh, "'The Gospel."
9 Davies, Mckernan, and Sabbagh, "'The Gospel."

Airstrike on the El-Remal aera in Gaza City
Credit: Wafa

seen since October 2023.

The ongoing outbreak of violence in Gaza began on October 7, 2023, when Hamas fighters conducted an attack against Israeli villages near the border. The Israeli government's most recent estimate of 1,200 killed makes this attack the deadliest against Israel since its creation in 1948.[10] This attack triggered Israel to respond with airstrikes that have destroyed most of Gaza's infrastructure and killed an estimated 24,000 Palestinians as of January 15, 2024.[11] Israel has been able to respond at this level largely due to the technologies it has used, specifically the use of new artificial intelligence technologies.[12]

One such tool is used by the Israeli military, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). It is an AI target-creation platform called *Habsora* (the Hebrew word for "the Gospel"). The *Habsora* system uses an AI algorithm that rapidly generates targets for airstrikes and bombing campaigns. It selects targets through a combination of drone footage of buildings, intercepted communications between people, and surveillance and monitoring of Gazans.

Beyond ethical issues in how the algorithm selects who and what will be bombed, the data used to select targets could not be gathered without a major violation of Palestinians' privacy rights. By early November 2023, the IDF had already identified more than 12,000 targets in Gaza.[13]

One of the most significant parts of this escalation in violence is the tools that Israel is using to surveil and target civilians. These actions constitute violations of Palestinian civilians' right to privacy and their right to life. Furthermore, the fact that these tools exist means that any country could develop or buy these technologies. Therefore, it is essential to create international frameworks for what technologies can be used in the surveillance and tracking of civilians and for what reasons.

The EU has taken the lead in solving this issue by creating an agreement that could change how AI is used. The deal includes banning AI systems that correlate biometric data with political beliefs, race, or anything else that could be discriminated against.[14] Although this is the first deal of its kind, there is

10   Daniel Byman, Riley McCabe, Alexander Palmer, Catrina Doxsee, Mackenzie Holtzand, and Delaney Duff, "Hamas's October 7 Attack: Visualizing the Data," Center for Strategic and International Studies, December 19, 2023, https://www.csis.org/analysis/hamass-october-7-attack-visualizing-data.
11   "Live Updates | Gaza Death Toll Tops 24,000 as UN Agencies Call Urgently for More Aid," *AP News*, January 15, 2024, https://apnews.com/article/israel-hamas-war-live-updates-01-15-2024-966bd5a9375e7439dd3de5fc113a7e7d.
12   Rabia Ali, "How is Israel using artificial intelligence in its deadly attacks on Gaza?" Anadolu Agency, December 21, 2023, https://www.aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/how-is-israel-using-artificial-intelligence-in-its-deadly-attacks-on-gaza/3088949.
13   Ali, "How is Israel."
14   Yakimova Yasmina and Ojamo Janne, "Artificial Intelligence Act: deal on comprehensive rules for trustworthy AI," European Parliament, December   9,   2023,   https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20231206IPR15699/artificial-intelligence-act-deal-on-comprehensive-rules-for-trustworthy-ai.

no telling whether or not countries will follow through with another similar deal. Creating a concrete set of regulations can prevent the use of AI-based systems to violate privacy rights in the future. The larger issue presents itself when numerous countries start adopting these technologies and using them harmfully. Therefore, the EU regulations could be a valuable model for other countries or the international community in regulating AI surveillance.

While the EU is trying to regulate AI, many executives from large companies have voiced concerns about the world's ability to regulate such a growing industry. Former Google Executive Eric Schmidt stated, "There's no one in government who can get [AI oversight] right."[15] Most regulations surrounding companies were written before the internet, let alone technologies that have only become common in the past few years or months. Regulations surrounding what companies are and are not allowed to do may not recognize how easy it is for data on civilians to be gathered. Therefore, there is a serious need for both domestic and international laws to catch up and address AI, which is largely unregulated.

No global organization currently exists with a dedicated role to regulate AI. This is a concern, especially considering this technology changes quickly without anyone determining what is allowed.[16] Whether AI is used to harass individuals or used against government bodies, updated regulation is necessary. It is the task of the UN Legal Committee to propose new legal frameworks to UN bodies and member states so that they can prevent the further use of AI to violate privacy rights.

Facial Recognition Systems

As new technologies become more common, the threat to each individual's privacy rights increases. The latest development is the use of Facial Recognition Systems (FRS) in certain parts of the world. Many countries use these systems for national security, while others use them to infringe on individual privacy rights.

Many governments are trying to implement FRS in public surveillance cameras.[17] These facial recognition systems collect, process, and store people's faces and unique features to be used to identify them later. This information is taken without the consent of the individual. As a result, these people can become

15 Tom Wheeler, "The three challenges of AI regulation," Brookings Institute, June 15, 2023, https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-three-challenges-of-ai-regulation/.
16 Wheeler, "The three challenges."
17 Nicole Lee, "Police surveillance and facial recognition: Why data privacy is imperative for communities of color," Brookings Institute, April 12, 2022, https://www.brookings.edu/articles/police-surveillance-and-facial-recognition-why-data-privacy-is-an-imperative-for-communities-of.

Demonstration of facial recognition software
Credit: Pete Woodhead
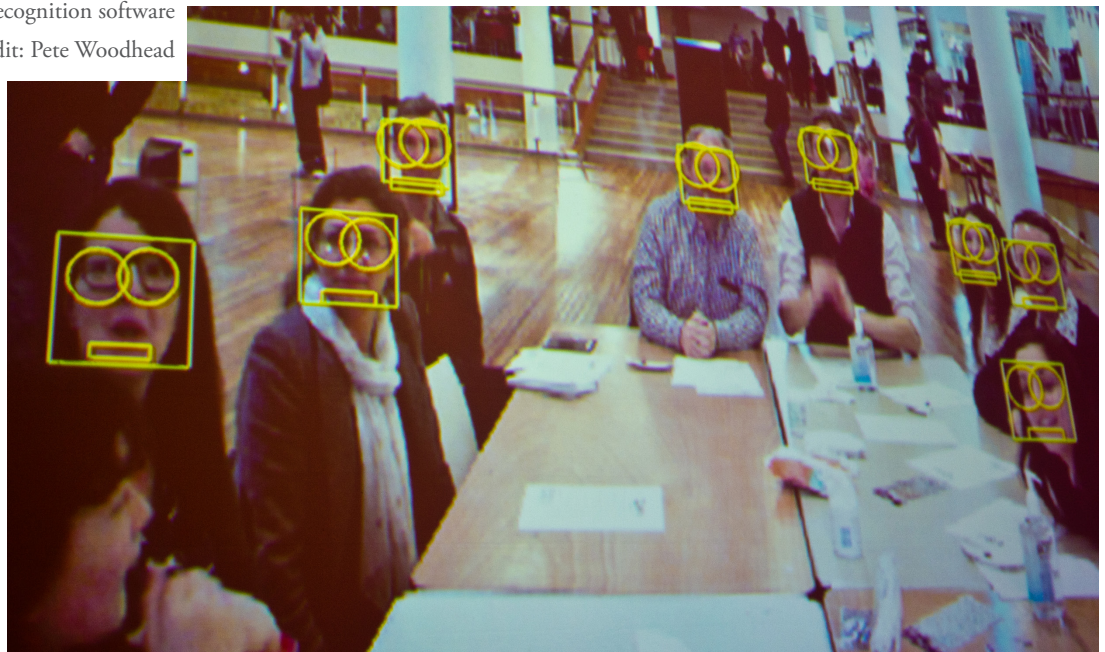
victims of privacy violations. The ability of stalkers to use this technology is especially concerning.[18] This is vital information that when in the wrong hands, risks violating the right to privacy in digital spaces and other human rights.

Companies have already started using these technologies without informing their customers. According to a recent document released by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the United States office regulating companies, the Pharmacy chain Rite Aid used its security cameras to collect facial recognition information and use them in a shoplifting identification system. Rite Aid deployed artificial intelligence-based facial recognition technology to identify customers who may have been engaged in shoplifting or other problematic behavior.[19] However, the system had many problems that also caused innocent people to be searched. According to the FTC, Rite Aid's system incorrectly labeled the faces of multiple customers as shoplifters.[20] As a result, the company will be banned from using facial recognition technology for five years. The FTC specifically stated that the ban resulted from Rite Aid lying about what it was using facial recognition for, as well as the company failing to protect its customers.[21] Although the FTC addressed this concern, it is not the only case of companies misusing technology. If companies cannot ensure their customers' safety because of this technology, then new regulations must be established.

Rite Aid's misuse of facial recognition technology is not unique. Currently, concerns of data being stored without protection and racial profiling in FRS are common anywhere that facial recognition software is used. Rite Aid was unable to create safety measures to ensure that any of the data they were storing was never to be stolen. They were also unable to keep their shoppers safe. People of color were impacted disproportionately. This shows that the system was inaccurate and discriminatory.[22] The most important point that these companies forget to address is the lack of transparency. Rite Aid never told its customers that their facial data was scanned and uploaded. The employees were also unprepared when it came to maintaining the system and reporting any issues or false positives that the system produced.[23]

Cases like the Rite Aid's are occurring all over the world. New legal precedent has taken place in Spanish courts, for example. A plastics manufacturer known as Plastic Forte has been fined for illegally using facial recognition systems to track the entry and exit of its employees. Employees had consented to images of their face being used but not for face biometrics.[24] The company was fined for doing so, but only for the minimum amount of EUR 6,251 (USD 6,540).[25] This is not the first time a Spanish company has been fined for illegally capturing data. It happened once before in a supermarket chain named Mercadona in which they were fined EUR 2.5 million for the same reason: lack of consent.[26] Companies like these are slowly becoming more aware that governments worldwide are beginning to regulate this new technology.

Cyberviolence against women and girls

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is the United Nations organization responsible for reproduction issues.[27] It addresses numerous issues in this role, including bodily autonomy, women's empowerment, and gender equality.[28]

18 Caroline Haskins, "Facial recognition tool Pimeyes — which has been used to stalk people

— is sued by 5 Illinois residents for 'irreparable injury,'" *Business Insider*, December, 13, 2023, https://www.businessinsider.com/facial-recognition-company-pimeyes-sued-under-illinois-privacy-law-2023-12.
19 "Rite Aid Banned from Using AI Facial Recognition After FTC Says Retailer Deployed Technology without ReasonableSafeguards," FTC, December 19, 2023, https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2023/12/rite-aid-banned-using-ai-facial-recognition-after-ftc-says-retailer-deployed-technology-without.
20 Pieter Arntz, "US pharmacy Rite Aid banned from operating facial recognition systems," Alware bytes labs, December 21, 2023,

https://www.malwarebytes.com/blog/news/2023/12/us-pharmacy-rite-aid-banned-from-operating-facial-recognition-systems.
21 FTC, "Rite Aid Banned."
22 Arntz, "US pharmacy."
23 Arntz, "US pharmacy."
24 Joel McCovney, "Spanish courts call facial recognition for employee management overkill," Biometric Update.com, October 3, 2023, https://www.biometricupdate.com/202310/spanish-courts-call-facial-recognition-for-employee-management-overkill.
25 McCovney, "Spanish courts."
26 Arntz, "US pharmacy."
27 "About us," United Nations Population Fund, accessed January 7, 2023, https://www.unfpa.org/about-us.
28 United Nations Population Fund, "About us."

UNFPA's Regional Director for East and Southern Africa, Lydia Zigomo, states that the digital age raises a double-edged sword for women and girls. Due to the internet, women have more job and education opportunities than ever. However, the internet opens them up to experiencing more violence, exploitation, and misogyny.[29] The internet can also deny women and girls opportunities to build financial security, provide for themselves, and break into positions and industries that are male-dominated.

Gender heavily impacts how people can access the internet. While the growth of the internet has allowed men to access online resources, as of October 2023, women are less connected to the rest of the world in the digital age. According to the latest data, only 63 percent of women worldwide accessed the internet. In comparison, the share of men going online was 68.6 percent.[30] Though this may appear to be a slight difference, it represents millions fewer women who can use the internet.

Consent is critical when talking about privacy in digital spaces.[31] According to the Australian Human Rights Commission, "to ensure the quality of consent to collect personal information, such consent must be voluntary, informed, current, specific, and unquestionable."[32] The lack of consent is an issue that includes children in general since they cannot provide this quality consent for their data to be tracked online. This is a significant issue on the internet today, and it has become even more prevalent as AI image generation has become publicly accessible. There are little to no restrictions on what

AI is allowed to make, and AI image generators can produce explicit pictures of real people. An example of this occurred in late January 2024, when AI-generated nude images of pop artist Taylor Swift were spread across social media without her consent.[33] X, formerly known as Twitter, was the primary platform for sharing these photos. X's guidelines state that nonconsensual content is not allowed, but removing such content is difficult.[34] This issue continues to be prevalent, not just for celebrities but for women and girls in general. Many teens across the US have reported seeing nonconsensual AI-generated photos of themselves. However, there are currently no laws against this in the US.[35]

Many of the same challenges that girls and women face in the real world are reflected in the digital world through cyberviolence.[36] Cyberviolence can be defined as any form of online sexual and emotional abuse, among other harmful actions.[37] Violence against women and girls is not a new phenomenon–according to the UNFPA, at least 20 percent of teenage girls in Eastern and Southern Africa have experienced physical or sexual violence. Now, with the internet and AI, these crimes are becoming more common online. 58 percent of teenage girls with online access have dealt with abuse on the internet.[38] According to the Institute of Development Studies, anywhere between 16 to 58 percent of women worldwide have dealt with online abuse based on their gender.[39] Cyberviolence against women and girls can limit the participation of women online.[40] It can also dissuade women from entering roles in technology and science.[41] This brings up a huge concern since

29 "The Digital Space Is the New Frontier for Gender-Based Violence," UNFPA ESARO, October 11, 2023, https://esaro.unfpa.org/en/news/digital-space-new-frontier-gender-based-violence.
30 Ani Petrosyan, "Global internet usage penetration rate as of October 2023, by gender," Statista, November 1, 2023, https://www.statista.com/statistics/1387693/penetration-rate-of-the-internet-by-gender/.
31 "Safeguarding the Right to Privacy," Australian Human Rights Commission, October 25, 2023, https://humanrights.gov.au/about/news/safeguarding-right-privacy.
32 Australian Human Rights Commission, "Safeguarding the Right to Privacy."
33 Kat Tenbarge, "Nude Deepfakes of Taylor Swift Went Viral on X, Evading Moderation and Sparking Outrage," *NBC News*, January 25, 2024, https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/misinformation/taylor-swift-nude-deepfake-goes-viral-x-platform-rules-rcna135669.
34 Kat Tenbarge, "Teen Marvel Star Speaks out about Sexually Explicit Deepfakes: 'Why Is This Allowed?'" *NBC News*, January 19, 2024, https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/misinformation/teen-marvel-star-xochitl-gomez-speaks-deepfake-rcna134753.
35 Tenbarge, "Nude Deepfakes."
36 UNFPA ESARO, "The Digital Space."
37 "Protecting children from online abuse," NSPCC Learning, December 5, 2023, https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/online-abuse/.
38 UNFPA ESARO, "The Digital Space."
39 UN Women Headquarters, "Frequently Asked Questions: Tech-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence," November 22, 2023, https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/faqs/tech-facilitated-gender-based-violence.
40 UN Women, "Frequently asked Questions."
41 UNFPA ESARO, "The Digital Space."

the majority of the estimated 2.9 billion people who remain unconnected to the internet are women and girls.[42]

One example of a government-led solution to this issue is Argentina's Olimpia Law (Ley Olimpia in Spanish). The Argentinian Olimpia Law was passed in October 2023.[43] It is based on a law with the same name passed in Mexico in 2021. The Olimpia Law is named after the Mexican activist Olimpia Coral who advocated for laws protecting women from cyberviolence after she was subjected to online abuse by her boyfriend.[44] The Mexican Olimpia Law criminalized the distribution of any kind of photos or messages that feature explicit content without the consent of the featured people. It also guaranteed the right for anyone to have their personal information protected.[45]

The recent Argentinian version goes beyond just regulating the spread of nonconsensual content. In addition to limiting the spread of this content, it also makes limiting women's access to internet freedom illegal. Furthermore, gender-based hate speech, AI-generated sexual content, cyberattacks, and any form of harassment that occurs over the internet are also banned under the Argentinian Olimpia Law.[46] Though the results of this law are yet to be seen, the passing of the law in Argentina is a significant step forward in protecting the rights of women and children online.

A major challenge in creating laws to tackle cyberviolence is where it intersects with privacy. Though cyberviolence itself violates victims' right to privacy, so can the laws intended to solve it. In some cases, laws intended to regulate cyberviolence can ultimately be used to spy on civilians. In October 2023, the United Kingdom passed the Online Safety Act, which requires websites to verify user ages. It also requires websites to delete any content that could promote violent or illegal behavior, as well as content that contains violence against children or animals. Finally, websites cannot host nonconsensual content or AI-generated sexual content.[47] This is significant progress for the UK's internet safety laws, with advocacy organizations such as End Violence Against Women supporting the law's passing.[48] However, the law has also drawn significant criticism because it mandates that any apps and services must allow the UK to examine the contents of any messages, including if they are encrypted. According to Google, "encryption is the process of protecting information or data by using mathematical models to scramble it in such a way that only the parties who have the key to unscramble it can access it."[49] Encryption is a method numerous apps use to secure users' data privacy. Apple's iMessage and Meta's WhatsApp are both messaging apps that use encryption to ensure that only the users on either end of a message can read it. Though the UK states that it will only use this regulation to make sure that child abuse does not occur over these platforms, many advocates are concerned about its potential to be used for censorship or surveillance of British citizens.[50]

These regulations on encrypted services are also unreasonable because little technology would allow the British government to examine end-to-end encrypted messages. The British government plans to announce the services affected by this requirement sometime in 2024. The requirement will go into effect in 2026.[51] Several providers, including the encrypted messaging app Signal, have stated that they intend to leave the

42 "Bridging the Gender Divide," ITU, November 2023, https://www.itu.int/en/mediacentre/backgrounders/Pages/bridging-the-gender-divide.aspx.
43 "Ley Olimpia: el Gobierno promulgó la legislación que incorpora la violencia digital como una modalidad de violencia de género," Argentina.gob.ar, October 24, 2023, https://www.argentina.gob.ar/noticias/ley-olimpia-el-gobierno-promulgo-la-legislacion-que-incorpora-la-violencia-digital-como-una.
44 "The 'Olimpia Law' Which Punishes Digital Violence Comes into Force in All of Mexico - The Yucatan Times," April 30, 2021, https://www.theyucatantimes.com/2021/04/the-olimpia-law-which-punishes-digital-violence-comes-into-force-in-all-of-mexico/.
45 Global Open University, "¿Cómo Se Relaciona La Ley Olimpia Con Los Derechos Humanos y La Protección de Datos?" November 22, 2023, https://www.globalopenuniversity.mx/blog-gou/todas-las-noticias/noticias-2023/como-se-relaciona-la-ley-olimpia-con-los-derechos-humanos-y-la-proteccion-de-datos.php.
46 Argentina.gob.ar, "Ley Olimpia."
47 Imran Rahman-Jones and Chris Vallance, "Online Safety Bill: Divisive Internet Rules Become Law," October 26, 2023, https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-67221691.
48 EVAW, "Online Safety Bill Becomes Law with Guidance to Protect Women and Girls," End Violence Against Women, October 26, 2023, https://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/online-safety-bill-becomes-law-with-guidance-to-protect-women-and-girls/.
49 Google Cloud, "What Is Encryption and How Does It Work?" accessed January 24, 2024, https://cloud.google.com/learn/what-is-encryption.
50 Rahman-Jones and Vallance, "Online Safety Bill."
51 Jon Porter, "The UK's Controversial Online Safety Bill Finally Becomes Law," The Verge, October 26, 2023, https://www.theverge.

British market if these regulations go into place, as they would be unable to guarantee the security of their users' messages.[52]

Sri Lanka passed a similar law on January 25, 2024. This law has the potential to be even more restrictive. It requires providers and users to delete any posts or information the government deems harmful.[53] Furthermore, the government could block access to accounts by creating a council that decides what content is appropriate for the internet. Like the British Online Safety Act, the Sri Lankan government has stated that it is passing this law to end cybercrimes such as online child abuse.[54] However, critics have stated that the council will effectively have full control over what can be said online and that this law will allow censorship.[55]

The British and Sri Lankan online safety laws are important because they indicate that international law must balance protecting women and children and protecting users' privacy. Delegates should consider these laws compared to the Olympia Laws of Mexico and Argentina. They should also consider how supporting similar regulations on an international level can help reduce the risks women and girls face when accessing the internet's numerous benefits. At the same time, they should be mindful of how some solutions could violate the human right to privacy more than they protect it. Delegates should also consider different types of cyberviolence and ensure that their solutions address the wide range of challenges that women may face on the internet.

Conclusion

In our digitally industrialized world, access to privacy seems trivial. However, as more and more measures are put into place to help preserve the privacy of individuals across the globe, a chance to maintain the right to privacy becomes clearer. Though new regulations are being implemented in some parts of the world, the temptation to misuse AI and other new technology against civilians is also rising. Creating legislation that addresses the challenges of AI completely while

understanding how countries have addressed legal challenges in the past is the toughest part of this committee. Creating a solution that can be implemented in every country is a tough task, as privacy is valued differently worldwide.

Facial recognition systems and cyberviolence are becoming more prevalent in our everyday lives, as are AI and digital surveillance. Protecting the most at-risk individuals from these threats is another task that calls upon the Legal committee. Some countries are beginning to understand the danger of this technology, while others fail to acknowledge the existential threat. Therefore, it is the job of an international body such as the Legal Committee to draw awareness to this problem and suggest solutions to the appropriate bodies.

com/2023/10/26/23922397/uk-online-safety-bill-law-passed-royal-assent-moderation-regulation.
52 Porter, "The UK's Controversial."
53 Morayo Ogunbayo and Rhea Mogul, "Sri Lanka Passes Controversial Bill to Regulate Online Content," *CNN*, January 25, 2024, https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/25/media/sri-lanka-online-safety-bill-pass-intl-hnk/index.html.
54 Ogunbayo and Mogul, "Sri Lanka Passes."
55 Ogunbayo and Mogul, "Sri Lanka Passes."

TOPIC B:
LEGAL STATUS OF CLIMATE REFUGEES

Introduction

Climate events are becoming more frequent and severe.[1] Because of this, there is an increasing need to define the legal status and provide legal protections for the people displaced by these conditions. This Update Paper highlights recent events emphasizing the importance of creating legal frameworks for climate refugees. Currently, there are no international laws specifically designed to protect people who are forced to leave their homes because of climate change. This leaves those affected without proper legal support or a recognized status. Nevertheless, there have been some advances in this area. This paper will draw attention to the role of non-state actors in filling the legal gaps, focusing on the recent involvement of NGOs in several countries. Additionally, it will look into a case study of Bangladesh, where locals face increasingly frequent climate disasters. When discussing these topics, it is crucial to consider the specific legal challenges climate refugees face.

The role of non-state actors

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play an important role in protecting climate refugees by filling gaps in legal frameworks. They do this by using tools such as policy advocacy and awareness-building. These actions can help address the challenges climate refugees face.[2] Their work can help inform the solutions the Legal Committee will implement.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) is an international NGO founded to investigate and expose human rights abuses. As part of this mission, it has brought attention to the human rights issues stemming from climate displacement. It also has a long history of emphasizing the importance of legal frameworks for assisting asylum seekers. It uses its platform to bring awareness to solutions that help climate refugees. It also offers a model

that delegates may be able to replicate with recommendations for change in international law.[3]

In July 2023, it published a report on the impact of rising sea levels on communities in Gardi Sugdub, an island in Panama. Due to sea level rise, the Indigenous Guna people are at risk of becoming internally displaced peoples (IDP), the equivalent of refugees for domestic displacement. The Guna people want to relocate to the mainland, where they will be safer. This is due to the increasing population of the island and the fact that it is sinking at an accelerating rate. However, the Guna people are concerned that relocation may cause elements of their ancestral culture to be lost.[4] The report discusses Panama's plan to relocate the Guna people. If implemented properly, this could be the first successful relocation program in the Americas.[5]

At the moment, this project faces some challenges. The relocation date for the 300 families looking to move to the mainland was delayed from September 2023 to February 2024. Furthermore, Gardi Sugdub locals worry their heritage will be diluted. One example of this is architecture. The Guna people have asked that their new homes be built in their traditional architectural style. However, the Panamanian government has built standardized homes called "housing units" for them. In response, the Vice Minister of Housing has addressed some of the Guna people's concerns about the design of the housing units.[6] However, whether the project will allow the Guna people to protect their culture is yet to be seen. As of October 2023, the new settlement site is over 90 percent completed.[7]

The end of the Human Rights Watch report provides a series of recommendations for both Panama and the islanders. This includes provisions for protecting heritage, education, and healthcare for the relocated families and those who remain on the island.[8] It is important to note that what Human

1 "Mapped: How Climate Change Affects Extreme Weather around the World," Carbon Brief, August 5, 2022, https://www.carbonbrief.org/mapped-how-climate-change-affects-extreme-weather-around-the-world/.
2 Alex Randall, "How Should Refugee and Migration NGOs Work on Climate Change Issues?" *Climate & Migration Coalition*, March 4, 2015, https://climatemigration.org.uk/how-should-refugee-and-migration-ngos-work-on-climate-change-issues/.
3 "About Our Research," *Human Rights Watch*, November 12, 2021, https://www.hrw.org/about/about-us/about-our-research.
4 Erica Bower, "'The Sea Is Eating the Land Below Our Homes,'" *Human Rights Watch*, October 27, 2023, https://www.hrw.org/report/2023/07/31/sea-eating-land-below-our-homes/indigenous-community-facing-lack-space-and-rising.
5 Bower, "'The Sea Is Eating.'"
6 "Proyecto Habitacional En Nuevo Cartí de Guna Yala Alcanza Un 91% de Avance," *El Capital Financiero*, October 15, 2023, https://elcapitalfinanciero.com/proyecto-habitacional-en-nuevo-carti-de-guna-yala-alcanza-un-91-de-avance/.
7 *El Capital Financiero*, "Proyecto Habitacional."
8 Bower, "'The Sea Is Eating the Land Below Our Homes.'"

Gardi Sugdub island in Panama
Credit: Cotopaxi5897

Rights Watch did in this case is somewhat unique. Not every resettlement effort worldwide will get a report from Human Rights Watch recommending how to protect Indigenous cultures. It is also not a guarantee that states will be as willing to listen as Panama has been or that states will even consider the wellbeing of Indigenous peoples. Therefore, the only way to guarantee that Indigenous people are the priority in all resettlement projects is by creating international regulations that protect them. As the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs states, "Indigenous peoples are among the first to face the direct consequences of climate change, due to their dependence upon, and close relationship with, the environment and its resources."[9] It is, therefore, even more important to create legal frameworks that protect Indigenous peoples in these cases. This is because they are simultaneously vulnerable to government harm and climate change.

More recently, Human Rights Watch drew attention to the harsh climate conditions migrant workers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) face. This occurred during the UN's annual climate conference, COP28, in Dubai. HRW called attention to the high temperatures migrant workers endure. These workers are not protected against the temperatures. Workers on site told representatives that "the air is hot as fire" and "our clothes become so hot they burn."[10] Worker's experience death, dehydration, exhaustion, and heat stroke. As a result of these risks, they urged delegates at the conference to ensure occupational heat protections are discussed, as COP has the power to create international agreements.[11]

The Background Guide discussed the concept of slow- versus rapid-onset displacement. Many migrant workers in the UAE can be classified as slow-onset climate refugees. This is because many of them come from countries experiencing long-term impacts of climate change, such as India and Bangladesh.[12] The effects of climate change in their home countries can damage the workers' original livelihoods. They are then forced to take on dangerous jobs in the UAE so that they can send money back home. Protections for climate refugees must not only account for rapid-onset displacement, but also slow-onset displacement. They must also understand how climate change can lead to the exploitation of climate refugees. Delegates could consider that many slow-onset climate refugees will be forced to find work away from home. By doing so, they

9   "Climate Change," United Nations Department for Economic and Cultural Affairs: Indigenous Peoples, accessed January 17, 2024, https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/climate-change.html.
10   Joey Shea, "Heat at COP28 Highlights Risks to Migrant Workers," *Human Rights Watch*, November 30, 2023, https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/30/heat-cop28-highlights-risks-migrant-workers.
11   Shea, "Heat at COP28 Highlights Risks to Migrant Workers."
12   "UAE: Migrant Worker Abuses Linked to Broader Climate Harms," *Human Rights Watch*, November 29, 2023, https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/21/uae-migrant-worker-abuses-linked-broader-climate-harms.

can ensure that countries do not exploit these workers in dangerous conditions.

Climate Refugees is another NGO dedicated to researching and advocating for the rights of climate refugees. In August 2023, they conducted significant research in Miami, Florida. This research investigated the conditions in Little Haiti and Liberty City. These locations were selected because they are home to communities that are largely non-white and low-income. As a result, they often face discrimination.[13]

The organization's research highlights the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable groups, such as immigrants, people of color, and low-income citizens in Miami. The report's analysis covers the health threats posed by rising temperatures. It found that outdoor workers face increased health risks due to climate change. Furthermore, it includes the perspectives of locals affected by the situation and gives them a platform to share their experiences. The report addresses critical issues, such as damage to housing infrastructure caused by harsh climate conditions. These findings show that, much like Dubai, Miami is a place where climate-related challenges persist, even though it is also a destination for people fleeing climate change.[14]

Climate Refugees also released a series of recommendations for Miami and the United States. These recommendations are designed to protect the population from the harmful effects of climate change. They also have the goal of easing the challenges that come with migration. They suggest building cooling centers and green spaces. These solutions can help reduce the effects of extreme heat. They also suggest funding upgrades that would improve cooling effectiveness in low-income areas. Finally, the report highlights that emergency alerts related to climate disasters should accommodate Miami's many non-

English speaking residents.[15]

Climate Refugees also released legal suggestions in their report. These can be used as inspiration for international guidelines on protecting climate refugees in their new countries. One recommendation was to establish guidelines on how hot a workplace can be. This measure could protect vulnerable workers in factories, kitchens, and outdoor settings.[16] Climate Refugees contributes to developing effective legal strategies to protect climate refugees by carrying out this research.

How Bangladesh Supports Climate Refugees

Bangladesh is one of the most climate-vulnerable countries globally. It is low-lying, has several major river deltas that flood frequently, and a vast coastline prone to cyclones. It also has a high population density, meaning any natural disaster puts millions at risk.[17] Cyclones, flooding, erosion, and other extreme weather events have displaced many people and threatened to displace even more Bangladeshis in the coming decades. According to the UN Development Programme, Bangladesh is the seventh most vulnerable country to climate disasters.[18] The World Bank estimates that by 2050, 19.9 million people will be internally displaced within the country due to climate change.[19] The capital, Dhaka, has become the destination for many displaced people. They are forced to move there when they lose their homes and livelihoods from climate disasters.[20]

The Young Power in Social Action (YPSA) project has largely helped climate IDPs and at-risk communities. Securing housing for displaced families is a key challenge. There is a need for sustainable solutions in response to climate-induced displacement. YPSA addresses this need.[21] YPSA is a

13 Ryan Plano and Amali Tower, "Climate Change Is Exacerbating Gentrification, Displacement and Inequality in Miami — Climate Refugees," *Climate Refugees*, December 18, 2023, https://www.climate-refugees.org/reports/2023/12/8/miami-climate-justice.
14 Plano and Tower, "Climate Change."
15 Plano and Tower, "Climate Change."
16 Plano and Tower, "Climate Change."
17 *Climate Vulnerability Index* (New York: UN Development Programme, March 22, 2023), https://www.undp.org/bangladesh/publications/climate-vulnerability-index-draft.
18 UN Development Programme, *Climate Vulnerability Index*.
19 Viviane Clement, "Groundswell Part 2: Acting on Internal Climate Migration," World Bank, September 13, 2021, https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/36248.
20 Clement, "Groundswell."
21 Sadiqur Rahman, "How Bangladesh Is Supporting Climate Refugees," *BBC*, December 8, 2023, https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20231206-how-bangladesh-is-supporting-climate-refugees.

Overpopulation in Dhaka, Bangladesh's Capital City
Credit: Soman

Bangladeshi NGO that works to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development through engaging impoverished communities.[22]

Livelihood loss is a major problem facing climate-related IDPs in Bangladesh. Organizations like YPSA run programs that help women re-earn lost income after disasters. One initiative they run is livestock rearing assistance, where women receive training on animal husbandry. These women often receive pregnant goats and supplies to kickstart small backyard farms. YPSA also facilitates tailoring and sewing skills workshops for displaced women, coupling the training with donated sewing machines so participants can launch their small-scale clothing production businesses.[23] These gender-based programs not only help participants support their households, but also empower them. Women comprise over 75 percent of students in YPSA's alternative livelihood projects. They are trained in creating small businesses in fisheries and poultry-raising industries. The skills women learn through YPSA classes contribute significantly to displaced families' livelihoods while also expanding women's agency in small rural communities.[24] Even with new homes and livelihoods, displaced families

remain vulnerable to shocks. To combat this, YPSA also helps them secure money from government programs. Registration for food or money assistance during disasters helps ensure refugees have an ongoing safety net.[25]

Several other non-profits also build houses for affected families. However, many organizations struggle to identify and purchase suitable plots to construct climate-resilient homes. This is due to factors such as government involvement. Architects and aid groups involved in building climate-proof housing in Bangladesh have emphasized the need for the Bangladeshi government to create a more structured plan for building climate-resistant housing and to connect existing individual efforts.[26] Environmental factors also play a role. The YPSA has faced difficulties in building houses due to delayed monsoons. Working around the islands and coastal localities during heavy rain makes it challenging. YPSA also struggles to keep up with demand after climate events.[27]

Climate-proof housing does not solve all of climate change's challenges either. While it can protect families from storms and floods, cyclone winds can still devastate possessions necessary

22 "About Us," Young Power in Social Action (YPSA), accessed January 30, 2024, https://ypsa.org/about-us/.
23 Rahman, "How Bangladesh."
24 Rahman, "How Bangladesh."
25 Rahman, "How Bangladesh."
26 Tahmid Zami, "Climate-Resilient Homes in Bangladesh Aim to Put Communities First," *Context*, June 19, 2023, https://www.context.news/climate-risks/climate-resilient-homes-in-bangladesh-aim-to-put-communities-first.
27 Rahman, "How Bangladesh."

to people's livelihoods. This includes livestock sheds, crops, boats, and other vital assets. Rebuilding or re-purchasing these essentials every time there is a storm is challenging. It strains the budgets of people who already have little money. According to the BBC, for example, one Bangladeshi family's new brick home successfully withstood a major cyclone. However, the storm still destroyed their small backyard poultry operation. Repeated rebuilding of small-scale farmers' and fishermen's property rapidly erodes their financial security.[16]

Bangladesh and other vulnerable countries have called for international funding to help cope with climate change losses and damages. At COP26 in 2021, Scotland became the first to pledge money for climate-impacted communities. So far, they have contributed GBP two million.[28] These funds, called loss and damage funds, help support organizations like YPSA. As a result, other high-income countries have been pressured to do the same.[29] However, helping climate-displaced people in Bangladesh remains a challenge. There are little to no institutions designed to protect Bangladeshis from climate events. There are no laws requiring IDPs in Bangladesh to receive education, sanitation, or housing. Access to these necessities remains a major problem in Bangladesh.[30]

At COP28, countries agreed to a Loss and Damage Fund Initiative to expand on initiatives such as Scotland's. It would create a worldwide fund that could be used to rebuild infrastructure damaged by climate events. This could prove vitally important for vulnerable countries like Bangladesh. This hard-fought fund guarantees the global responsibility to address loss and damage. It is also a major step toward supporting Bangladesh and other low-income countries vulnerable to climate change. This is key to the discussion surrounding climate refugees because it will ideally help countries rebuild before people are permanently displaced. As one of the most climate-vulnerable nations, Bangladesh stands to receive compensation for its numerous floods and storms through this fund. This is significant because

countries, particularly wealthy countries in the Global North, refused to implement this idea for over 30 years.[31] Money dedicated to damage recovery could help expand the efforts of organizations like YPSA.[32] These benefits are not exclusive to Bangladesh either. They would help many other countries that are vulnerable to climate change.

Delegates should consider strengthening the loss and damage fund through international law. This may include legislation expecting countries to provide certain amounts of money. Guaranteeing that vulnerable nations can access substantial resources is essential. This funding would allow these countries to cope with losses. Introducing international law that addresses this concern is also a matter of climate justice. Most emissions causing climate change did not come from the most affected countries. Therefore, by paying into loss and damage funds, developed countries are addressing the harms they have indirectly caused.

Creating proactive regulations that set expectations for how governments respond to climate disasters can help address these issues. Though the COP28 loss and damage fund shows that progress has been made, there is a long way to go in terms of rehousing climate refugees or IDPs. Furthermore, progress can be made by expecting countries to collaborate on rebuilding damaged infrastructure. For example, potential international law could require countries to share the burden of reconstruction after climate disasters. Delegates in the Legal Committee should consider that NGOs' role in helping Bangladeshi communities rebuild is not sustainable. Governments should not expect NGOs to realistically take on the burden of consistently rebuilding damages. This is especially important in countries where NGOs do not have a significant presence. For this reason, delegates should consider how the UN and governments can take on more responsibility. When recommending solutions to relevant UN bodies, delegates should consider which organizations have the most appropriate mandates to take on these responsibilities and

28 "Scotland to Boost Climate Funding," Government of Scotland, November 11, 2021, http://www.gov.scot/news/scotland-to-boost-climate-funding/.
29 Rahman, "How Bangladesh."
30 *Voices of IDPs in Bangladesh* (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, March 2021), https://www.un.org/internal-displacement-panel/sites/www.un.org.internal-displacement-panel/files/bangladesh_idp_report_4mar2021_final.pdf.
31 Matt McGrath, "Poor Countries Win Fight for Climate Cash at COP28," *BBC News*, November 30, 2023, https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-67581277.
32 Rahman, "How Bangladesh."

how best to share the burden of climate change fairly.

Conclusion

As outlined above, the realities of climate refugees and IDPs are constantly changing. This change means that the international community cannot continue to ignore climate refugees. Legal frameworks must be developed as soon as possible.

Delegates should consider how NGOs fill legal gaps and advocate for climate refugees. Organizations like Human Rights Watch and Climate Refugees are responsible for taking action and advocating for change. Both of these roles can serve as inspiration for how the Legal Community can develop solutions.

Additionally, the situation in Bangladesh is a case study of a country facing massive internal displacement from climate impacts. Organizations like the YPSA are helping rebuild livelihoods. However, significant challenges persist. The lack of legal residency hinders access to assistance for many climate migrants. Land constraints also limit the construction of adequate resilient housing.

The recent establishment of "loss and damage" funding is a big step towards securing more resources for climate-vulnerable countries to cope with climate change. However, the scale of displacement projected in Bangladesh alone signals the immense challenges ahead. Creative policy solutions are urgently needed to uphold the rights and dignity of those forced to flee climate disasters. Developing clear legal definitions and protections for the status of climate migrants must be the priority in these efforts. Delegates must use their power to provide UN bodies and governments with the solutions and definitions to create a legal basis to protect climate refugees.

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The National High School Model United Nations Conference (NHSMUN) is a project of IMUNA, a non-profit organization formally associated with the United Nations Department of Global Communications (UNDGC). IMUNA is dedicated to promoting global issues education through simulation.

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