



NHSMUN

UNSC-B

UPDATE PAPER

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Sofia Velasco

Renata Venzor

Dear Delegates,

I am super excited to welcome you all to the United Nations Security Council Committee (UNSC)! My name is Luna Valayannopoulos-Akrivou, and I will be your Assistant Director for Session I of NHSMUN 2025. While this will be my first year on NHSMUN staff it will be my fourth year attending the conference and third year on the Security Council.

A little bit more about me, I was born and raised in Paris, France to Greek parents and moved to the US about ten years ago. Now, I'm back in Paris as a sophomore of the SciencesPo Paris UC Berkeley Dual Degree Program (if anyone is from the Bay area, would love some recommendations!) and currently majoring in Economics and Sociology with a Minor in Law. Outside of school, I love anything to do with the outdoors, especially sailing, surfing, or hiking related. I'm also big on travel and would love to get more into backpacking. I literally keep rewatching the same shows (namely *Jane the Virgin* and *Young Sheldon*), so please let me know if you have any good show recommendations.

In terms of MUN, I have had the chance to continue in the college circuit at conferences all over France as both a delegate in the UNSC and chair for the International Press Forum (IPF). I think the beautiful thing about MUN is that it stays with you. Whether it's in continuing MUN in college or using the skills from MUN to grow as a diplomat and individual, this journey will always be an integral part of your self-growth.

This year, I can confidently say that our staff team has worked incredibly hard to make this the best conference yet. My co-Assistant Director and I have diligently worked on and researched both topics *The Conflict in Afghanistan* and *The Situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh* to put together this Update Paper for you. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to reach out, we are here to help.

Being able to staff this committee has been such an amazing experience already and I can't wait to meet you all in March!

Kind Regards,

Luna Valayannopoulos-Akrivou

Assistant Director, Session I

United Nations Security Council

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Sofia Velasco
Renata Venzor

Dear Delegates,

I am thrilled to welcome you to the United Nations Security Council B!

My name is Marlon Nnamocha, and I will be your Assistant Director for Session II of NHSMUN 2025.

This is my first year as a member of NHSMUN staff, and I am as thrilled as you are to finally attend the conference with you!

My first and last NHSMUN experience was in 2023, as a delegate for the crisis committee on Scotland's independence.

As for me, I was born and raised in Germany and lived for two years in France during the end of high school. Currently, I am studying Business Administration at the Leuphana University of Lüneburg. Outside of university, I try my best to learn the piano and for this new year I'll try to pick up jogging again! I like so many things, but my favorite, I'd say, is learning; new things, facts, languages, cultures—everything!

When I did Model UN for the first time in 2023, I was a little scared and not that confident during my first day, to the point that I did not speak. However, I learned that, at NHSMUN, everyone is here to support and guide you. Everyone wants you to succeed and make the best out of our conference. Starting day two, my confidence boosted, and I participated more alongside other delegates. What I want to say is that you don't need to be scared, worried, or stressed. We are all here to have an amazing time, and I can't wait to see you succeed in 2025!

I know the issues in Nagorno-Karabakh and Afghanistan will be challenging to tackle, but I am ecstatic to see your work and hear your unique and innovative solutions.

As the conference approaches, feel free to contact me if you have any questions or if you just want to introduce yourself!

I truly cannot wait to meet you all in March!

Marlon Nnamocha

Assistant Director, Session II

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UNSC-B

NHSMUN 2025



TOPIC A: THE SITUATION IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH

Photo Credit: Rob

Introduction

The situation in the Nagorno-Karabakh region is still contested with cultural, political, and international tensions. Unfortunately, little progress was made recently to find a long-term solution. Armenia is willing to engage in constructive peace talks, but Azerbaijan is reluctant to meet. Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Aykhan Hajizade said that signing this framework peace treaty with Armenia is "unacceptable."¹ It also "only serves to postpone the solution of existing problems in bilateral relations to the next stage."² Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan saw the signing of the articles of the drafted peace treaties as a basis, or "fundamental document" from which additional issues could be further discussed. Hajizade did not approve of this, stating, "important aspects were not included in the draft of the agreement, and we were told that this was the solution to the issue. These quotes highlight how contentious the situation in the region is. Both sides are very distrustful of each other and neither side fully believes the other will honor the agreement.

For those observing in the international community, the agreement and its clauses are of "great importance". Observers have recommended that Armenia "take these issues more seriously."³ It is unclear what Armenia allegedly left out from the draft. Yet Azerbaijan remains firm in its position. This has only continued to further the doubt and distrust between both sides. Without this agreement, there are no confidence-building measures to make sure that both sides can trust each other again. As of September 2024, Azerbaijan laid out several demands for prerequisites for any peace treaty. There are quite a few, including the clearance of the "Zangezur Corridor" to allow the passage of non-Armenian people and goods. Additionally, Azerbaijani negotiators demand the return of "Western Azerbaijanis" to modern-day Armenia. Lastly, the demands call for the restriction of Armenian armed forces and the dissolution of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) Minsk Group.⁴ Additionally, the Russian Federation and People's Republic of China have also become more involved in negotiations. As larger regional powers, they have become more interested in the conflict. Delegates will need to look at the current arrangements of peace talks and see how to improve them. However, there

are also other players that the committee should be aware of and how they will influence peace talks. All in all, recent developments, international dynamics, and new partnerships may change the course of the conflict in the long term.⁵

Revitalized Regional Alliances and Peacemaking Operations

First, it is important to understand the regional and international alliances and their recent development. Armenia has been distancing itself from Russia in the last three decades. This made way for more strategic opportunities for the country to assess its geopolitical goals. In April 2024, it was allegedly reported that India became the largest exporter of military equipment to Armenia.⁶ Later that year, Armenian and Indian Defense Ministers signed a defense cooperation agreement for training activities and institutional cooperation.⁷ Armenia has yet to officially confirm the list of weapons India supplied. At the same time, it is vital to acknowledge recent Armenian success in assuming some more border control. For the first time in over 30 years, Armenian border guards regained control of some checkpoints after the withdrawal

1 Arshaluys Barseghyan, "Azerbaijan Refuses to Sign Peace Treaty Based on Already Agreed Points." OC Media, September 11, 2024, <https://oc-media.org/azerbaijan-refuses-to-sign-peace-treaty-based-on-already-agreed-points/>.

2 Barseghyan, "Azerbaijan Refuses to Sign Peace Treaty Based on Already Agreed Points."

3 Barseghyan, "Azerbaijan Refuses to Sign Peace Treaty Based on Already Agreed Points."

4 Barseghyan, "Azerbaijan Refuses to Sign Peace Treaty Based on Already Agreed Points."

5 United Nations, "Activities of Secretary-General in Azerbaijan, 11-15 November," press release, November 22, 2024, <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sgt3408.doc.htm>

6 Leonid Nersisyan, "Escaping Russia's Backyard: Armenia's Strategic Defense Shift." *APRI Institute*, last modified Dec 9, 2024, <https://apri.institute/escaping-russias-backyard-armenias-strategic-defense-shift/>.

7 Eugene Kogamn, *The Role of Foreign Actors in the Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Russia, Turkey, China, and India* (Vienna: Austrian Institute for European and Security Policy, March 2024), https://www.aies.at/download/2024/AIES_Focus-2024-3.pdf.

of Russian troops from the area.⁸ These checkpoints include its sole crossing with Iran which has frequently been a point of contention. Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan announced the agreement on October 8, 2024, and the withdrawal was effectively completed before its January 1, 2025, deadline. While the Russians have not withdrawn from the border entirely, it returns a vital crossing to Armenian power and allows them to guard the border with Turkey alongside Russian forces.⁹ This victory reflects a strategy to diminish foreign control diplomatically. As Yerevan distances itself from Moscow, the United States and the European Union (EU) could also be interested in actively supporting these developments to balance out Russian and Azerbaijani influence. Recently, the US has shown an increased interest in Armenia conducting two peacekeeping drills on Armenian soil in 2023 and 2024. France has also been an important partner and military ally for Armenia. France's more recent involvement includes training Armenian forces and reforming its military institutions and the visit of French Defense Minister Sebastien Lecornu to Yerevan.¹⁰

8 Azatutyun, "Russian Border Guards Leave Armenia-Iran Checkpoint," *Azatutyun*, December 30, 2024, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/33258387.html>

9 Faustine Vincent, "Armenia takes partial control of its borders for the first time in 32 years," *Le Monde*, October 17, 2024, https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/10/17/armenia-takes-partial-control-of-its-borders-for-the-first-time-in-32-years_6729628_4.html

10 Nersisyan, "Escaping Russia's Backyard: Armenia's Strategic Defense Shift."

11 Nordic Monitor, "Erdogan Still Ignores Azerbaijan's Discomfort in Nagorno-Karabakh War Remarks," Nordic Monitor, September 2024, <https://nordicmonitor.com/2024/09/erdogan-still-ignores-azerbajians-discomfort-in-nagorno-karabakh-war-remarks/>.

12 Nordic Monitor, "Erdogan Still Ignores Azerbaijan's Discomfort in Nagorno-Karabakh War Remarks."

13 Nordic Monitor, "Erdogan Still Ignores Azerbaijan's Discomfort in Nagorno-Karabakh War Remarks."

Armenia has been strengthening its military ties with its allies and has been doing a lot to secure more equipment and training. On the other hand, Azerbaijan's strained relationships with former-allies Turkey paint a very different picture. As a NATO Member, Turkey has vowed its long-lasting support for Azerbaijan "on the battlefield or on the negotiation table" if needed.¹¹ Turkey and Azerbaijan relations date way back as Turkey played an important role in Azerbaijan's military superiority over Armenia during the 44-day war. In a recent speech on August 31, 2024, Turkish President Erdogan expressed that, "In Azerbaijan's Karabakh, together with our Azerbaijani brothers, we completely eliminated the enemy forces."¹² This comment felt displaced for Azerbaijanis. They certainly do not see Turkey as their savior. An Azerbaijani news editorial put it as "Azerbaijan's victory is for the entire Turkic world, but Turkey is not its architect."¹³ Many Azerbaijani media groups have accused Turkey of distorting the facts of the 44-day war. On top of this, Erdogan's speech is not the first instance whereby Azerbaijan has felt uncomfortable with Turkish statements.

Azeri soldiers celebrate the transfer of the Lachin regions as part of their peace deal with Armenia

Credit: Al Jazeera



While Armenia and Azerbaijan's alliances and partnerships have been changing, organizations like the EU and OSCE have continued to play a large role in the region. Since February 2024, the EU has increased its humanitarian aid to displaced Karabakh Armenians, who fled the country during last year's mass exodus. Of this aid, USD 1.5 million is going towards disaster preparedness and the remaining USD four million of humanitarian funding has been distributed in the form of cash transfers and vouchers to help the displaced meet their basic needs.¹⁴ In addition to providing more intense humanitarian aid, the EU's involvement in the conflict has been political. As of October 24, 2024, the European Parliament denounced Azerbaijan's human rights record and put an end to its gas dependency on Baku. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) urged the European Commission's Ursula von der Leyen to condemn the country's poor track record in human rights.¹⁵ They have also called to suspend the 2022 Memorandum of Understanding on the Strategic Partnership in the Field of Energy between the EU and Azerbaijan. They specified that any future partnerships between the EU and Azerbaijan should be made upon the release of political prisoners, enforcing legal reforms, and improving the human rights situation.¹⁶ Azerbaijan should also demonstrate willingness to engage in peace negotiation with Armenia, as MEPs advocate for the signing of the pending peace agreements. Until then, they have called on members to freeze all military and security exports to Azerbaijan, warning that "further military actions against Armenia would be met with serious consequences."¹⁷

On December 26, 2024, Russia agreed with Azerbaijan to dissolve the OSCE Minsk group. The group was the only internationally recognized mediator over the conflict since

1992.¹⁸ President Aliyev proposed this dissolution on multiple occasions given Armenia's recognition of the Nagorno-Karabakh region as an "integral part of Azerbaijan" at the summit held on October 6, 2022.¹⁹ Pashinyan expressed that "if there is no conflict, what's the meaning of the existence of a format dealing with the conflict resolution?"²⁰ At the same time, Armenia remains wary, especially of Azerbaijani rhetoric over Western Azerbaijan, stating, "we also want to be convinced that Azerbaijan is approaching this issue with the same logic."²¹ President Aliyev is enthusiastic about the right to return of Armenian refugees back to Nagorno-Karabakh, but Rauf Mirgadivov, a prominent Azerbaijani journalist, told OC Media that "even imagining the return of people (...) is impossible."²²

The politicization of these regional groups could alter the course of the conflict. Azerbaijan already faces international punishments for the brunt of its actions. Its alienation from the European community can have grave consequences for the country who would lack any kind of support from the continent. Delegates should bear these points in mind. Western countries are interested to leverage on these dynamics and side with the EU to apply punitive sanctions on the country. Azerbaijan and its allies will strike back in response to new developments, both economically and militarily looking at markets beyond Europe. Historically, the conflict has reflected the extremely diverse and complicated religious, social, and cultural history of the region. As such, it is important to keep in mind that it has more recently taken on a far more international role. Delegates should consider how the following powers can play a strategic role in coming to a long-term solution for the two countries, as the endless punishment on one will also drive the conflict nowhere. Azerbaijan's ambitious projects, presented

14 "General Orientations on Operational Priorities for Humanitarian Aid in 2025," European Commission, November 6, 2024, https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/b87f7d02-66d2-4951-b19e-e5930e8f1526_en?filename=SWD_2024_257_F1_STAFF_WORKING_PAPER_EN_V3_P1_3732814.PDF.

15 European Parliament, "MEPs Denounce Violations of Human Rights and International Law by Azerbaijan," October 17, 2024, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20241017IPR24740/meps-denounce-violations-of-human-rights-and-international-law-by-azerbaijan>.

16 European Parliament, "MEPs Denounce Violations of Human Rights and International Law by Azerbaijan."

17 European Parliament, "MEPs Denounce Violations of Human Rights and International Law by Azerbaijan."

18 Aytan Farhadova and Arshaluys Barseghyan, "Russia Agrees with Azerbaijan to Dissolve OSCE Minsk Group," *OC Media*, December 26, 2024, <https://oc-media.org/russia-agrees-with-azerbaijan-to-dissolve-osce-minsk-group/>.

19 Farhadova and Barseghyan, 2024, "Russia Agrees with Azerbaijan to Dissolve OSCE Minsk Group."

20 Farhadova and Barseghyan, 2024, "Russia Agrees with Azerbaijan to Dissolve OSCE Minsk Group."

21 Farhadova and Barseghyan, 2024, "Russia Agrees with Azerbaijan to Dissolve OSCE Minsk Group."

22 Farhadova and Barseghyan, 2024, "Russia Agrees with Azerbaijan to Dissolve OSCE Minsk Group."

at the COP29 climate conference, held in Baku, add to the regional tensions.²³ Azerbaijan announced plans to construct solar, wind, and hydropower plants in Nagorno-Karabakh as a push towards more green energy. These projects were viewed by many as a greenwashing attempt to portray Azerbaijan in a more positive light; the country denies these claims, however, and continues to emphasize the positive impact these plants would have on energy, diverting the narrative away from politics. The projects remain controversial as they risk erasing Armenian heritage and history in the region.²⁴

Delegates should consider the advancements in these various partnerships and organizations. Armenia can reinforce its military prowess through its strategic allies. Azerbaijan is facing doubts about its own ally, notably Turkey. As the current stalemate remains a ticking bomb, these alliances will play a major role in the region's future. A new conflict could take on a more international price and the imposition of new sanctions. At the national level, both countries would calculate the benefits and losses the strategic alliances bring to their diplomatic network and internal stability. Countries involved in the situation should therefore explore possible

²³ Yusuf Khan, "At COP29, the Host Boasted About Its Renewable-Energy Plans. They Just Happen to be on Disputed Territory," *Wall Street Journal*, December 20, 2024, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/at-cop29-the-host-boasted-about-its-renewable-energy-plans-they-just-happen-to-be-on-disputed-territory-62928d38>.

²⁴ Khan, "At COP29, the Host Boasted About Its Renewable-Energy Plans. They Just Happen to be on Disputed Territory."

²⁵ President of Russia, "Vladimir Putin and Ilham Aliyev made statements for the media," August 19, 2024, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/74887>.

policies and actions that minimize the diplomatic risks towards their national politics. Ultimately, the UN Security Council should be prepared at the mere idea of such a threat. The committee's role in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is limited compared to other conflict situations. Updating the committee's knowledge on the regional dynamics would be the first step before addressing the long-term peacebuilding efforts at the international level. The committee's success would hugely depend on how the UN Security Council navigates its mandate towards upholding international peace and security in the South Caucasus.

The Emergence of Russia and China in Peace Talks

On August 19, 2024, Russian President Vladimir Putin made his visit to Baku. In the statement for the media, Putin emphasized Moscow's efforts to contribute to the "normalization of Azerbaijani-Armenian interaction and the conclusion of a peace treaty" to carry out the agreements between the three countries.²⁵ The day after Putin's visit, Azerbaijan officially applied to join the BRICS bloc of



Armenians along the Nagorno-Karabakh Exodus

Credit: Council on Foreign Relations

emerging economies that includes Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.²⁶ This proved to be a new turning point in the face of Armenia-Azerbaijani peace talks. Despite the war in Ukraine, Putin exclaimed remaining committed to his role as a peace mediator between Azerbaijan and Armenia.²⁷ Russia has played the role of the traditional mediator between the South Caucasus. Yet its involvement in the Russo-Ukrainian war led to the Western powers scooping in to challenge it for its place. In his most recent trip however, Putin expressed, “if we can do something to sign a peace agreement between Azerbaijan and Armenia, we will be very happy to.”²⁸

Now, this commitment as a peace mediator does not come without political and economic agendas of its own. For one, Putin’s visit to Baku addressed more than just the country’s title of a mediator. During that time, Putin and President Aliyev announced a USD 120 million investment to boost cargo transportation between the two countries.²⁹ For Putin, such a deal is particularly important, as sanctions imposed on it by Western powers have made him increasingly depend on his allies like Azerbaijan for access to global markets, especially through Iran and the Indian Ocean. Azerbaijan sees this deal as an opportunity to remain on “Moscow’s good-will” for reasons of national security.³⁰ The ongoing talks between leaders of Azerbaijan and Russia reflects the close relationship between Baku and Moscow. Considering Armenia’s diplomatic outlook towards the West and other non-aligned countries, Baku’s diplomatic discussions with Moscow could suggest Russia’s efforts to strengthen its diplomatic and economic network which has shrunk since the first day of the military campaign against Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The relatively positive relationship between Azerbaijan and Russia could head into

different directions after the Azerbaijan Airlines flight J2-8243 crashed near Aktau Airport in Kazakhstan on December 25, 2024. This crash unfortunately claimed 38 lives.³¹ The investigation is ongoing. But so far, the findings have shown that the flight was crashed in relation to the surface-to-air missiles used by the Russian air defense.³² Putin apologized on December 28, 2024, saying that it occurred in the Russian airspace as the country’s air defense system was countering Ukrainian drones.³³ The next day, Aliyev called for a complete and fair investigation that uncovered the conditions which precisely led to the event.³⁴

How the leaders respond to the subsequent stages would have a significant impact on the bilateral relationship. Baku and Moscow’s attitude towards addressing the long-term impact of this plane crash could talk more about the current state of the bilateral relationship prior to advancing towards the peace talk stages between Armenia and Azerbaijan. It is unlikely that the plane crash would upset the course of the diplomatic relationship between Baku and Moscow. Nevertheless, it remains certain that this development would set the tone for any diplomatic discussions among the countries involved in the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh region. Therefore, the UN Security Council should carefully evaluate the recent developments in the South Caucasus region. How the regional dynamics develop outside of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict would strongly influence the trajectory of the diplomatic discussions at different levels.

China has increased its presence in the Caucasus in recent years. Strategic partnerships and investments with Azerbaijan have increased its influence in the region as part of its extensive Belt

26 Associated Press, “Day after Putin’s visit, Azerbaijan applies to join Russia and China in the BRICS alliance,” *AP News*, August 20, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/azerbaijan-russia-china-brics-putin-e4f31a0b06bef96cc329e88058c35dfd>.

27 Al Jazeera, “Putin Offers to Mediate Azerbaijan-Armenia Peace Deal on Trip to Baku,” *Al Jazeera*, August 19, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/8/19/putin-offers-to-mediate-azerbaijan-armenia-peace-deal-on-trip-to-baku>.

28 Al Jazeera, “Putin Offers to Mediate Azerbaijan-Armenia Peace Deal on Trip to Baku.”

29 Associated Press, “Putin Visits Azerbaijan, Offers to Mediate Peace with Armenia,” *AP News*, August 20, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/russia-putin-azerbaijan-aliyev-716a43e7f4a34b0d08e3da79dc84f4f8>.

30 Associated Press, “Putin Visits Azerbaijan, Offers to Mediate Peace with Armenia.”

31 David Brennan, Anastasia Bagaeva, and Victoria Beaulé, “Crashed Azerbaijan plane damaged by fire from Russia, Azerbaijani president says,” *ABC News*, December 29, 2024, <https://abcnews.go.com/International/crashed-azerbaijan-plane-damaged-fire-russia-azerbaijani-president/story?id=117175680>.

32 Niko Vorobyov, “‘Lack of humanity’: Why Azerbaijan is angry with Russia over plane crash,” *Al Jazeera*, January 1, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/1/1/lack-of-humanity-why-azerbaijan-is-angry-with-russia-over-plane-crash>.

33 International Crisis Group, “Tracking Conflict Worldwide,” accessed January 18, 2025, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/crisiswatch/database?location%5B%5D=61>.

34 International Crisis Group, “Tracking Conflict Worldwide.”

and Road Initiative (BRI). This program is a comprehensive plan to increase economic connectivity and trade.³⁵ In 2019 alone, Chinese investments in Azerbaijan amounted to over USD 800 million, and the opposite exceeded USD 1.7 billion.³⁶ At the same time, Azerbaijan has become more open to accepting Chinese support in rebuilding the Karabakh region; while initially reluctant to such cooperation, more room has been made for Chinese companies to invest in the region.³⁷ Such interactions showcase their mutual desire to create stronger ties, which can lead to greater Chinese presence in the affairs of the Caucasus. In addition to that, the diplomatic relationship between Azerbaijan and China grew stronger. Mutual trust and cooperation were reemphasized through several high-level meetings between the countries' leaders in recent months.³⁸ Chinese Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang confirmed China's commitment to supporting Azerbaijan with implementing the Global Security Initiative and Global Civilization Initiative, among other future goals. At the same time, Armenian President Ilham Aliyev reiterated Azerbaijan's support for the BRI.³⁹ The countries' engagement with each other at the COP29 summit further highlighted their mutual engagement on many issues.⁴⁰

It is important to note that cooperation between the countries has been growing for several years and is likely to continue in the future. For the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, China has retained a neutral stance, calling for a peaceful resolution. Still, the country continues to emphasize support for Azerbaijan's territorial integrity, likely to protect its investments and promote its interests in the region.⁴¹ At the same time, Azerbaijan emphasized its support for China's territorial integrity with regards to Taiwan, fostering mutual trust between the countries.⁴² The deepening of the countries' ties will inevitably influence the economic development of Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as the power balance of the region as a whole. China's

growing cooperation with Azerbaijan may significantly impact the geopolitical situation of the South Caucasus.

Conclusion

In all of this, the role of the United Nations (UN) is often questioned. Since no direct long-term mission has ever been dispatched in the region, many see the UN as falling short of its role. Organizations like the EU and OSCE have tried to fill in the gap and provide support. For the most part, its efforts have been largely humanitarian-based assistance and diplomatic mediation efforts. No real concrete action has taken place to create a long-lasting peace in the region. For treaties that have been proposed, neither side has been willing to make moves to find a compromise. This has caused a diplomatic stalemate, and no progress has been made. The conflict has yet to be recognized as a threat to international peace and security. Without recognition, the UNSC cannot justify direct interventions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. This chapter in the charter sets the conditions to have peacekeeping troops be deployed in the region. Delegates should come to a consensus as to whether the conflict does in fact constitute a more global threat.

If the UNSC believes that this conflict is a threat to global peace, the Security Council must act fast. The role of peacekeeping can become far more pronounced if there is effective leadership and a clear goal for the mission. There is potential to change the fate of the conflict for the better. Delegates of the UN Security Council should consider the ongoing developments in the South Caucasus region. There are also many other external stakeholders who play a role in this conflict. Russia and China continue to invest heavily in diplomatic relationships. On the other hand, the EU and

35 Zaur Shiryev, "What Can Azerbaijan Expect From Its New Partnership With China?" Carnegie Politika, August 13, 2024, <https://carnegieendowment.org/russia-eurasia/politika/2024/08/azerbaijan-china-relations?lang=en>.

36 Benyamin Poghosyan, "Analysis: China and the South Caucasus," commonspace.eu, November 24, 2024, <https://www.commonspace.eu/analysis/analysis-china-and-south-caucasus>.

37 Shiryev, "What Can Azerbaijan Expect From Its New Partnership With China?"

38 "Chinese vice premier meets with Azerbaijani president Aliyev," The State Council of the People's Republic of China, November 14, 2024, https://english.www.gov.cn/news/202411/14/content_WS6735ba5bc6d0868f4e8ecfe.html.

39 The State Council of the People's Republic of China, "Chinese vice premier meets with Azerbaijani president Aliyev."

40 Reuters, "China sends vice premier to COP29 climate summit in Baku," *Reuters*, November 8, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/china-sends-vice-premier-cop29-climate-summit-baku-2024-11-08/>.

41 Julianna Ármás et al., "Azerbaijan in the Era of Change," Hungarian Institute of International Affairs, January 10, 2025, https://hiia.hu/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/mki_FPR_2023_2_online-2.pdf.

42 Julianna Ármás et al., "Azerbaijan in the Era of Change."

OSCE have been key in providing humanitarian support and defending human rights. Understanding the status as well as the collateral implications is essential. This will allow the UN Security Council to take action that addresses both short and long-term consequences of potential solutions. Together, delegates can develop a sustainable peace in the historically disputed territory.



UNSC-B

NHSMUN 2025

No to
Taliban

NO TO SHARIA
NO TO THE TALIBAN!

**WOMEN SAY
NO TO SHARIA**



TOPIC B: THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Introduction

Despite efforts over the past year, the situation in Afghanistan has not yet improved. The humanitarian situation has intensified as nearly 24 million people—representing over half of the country’s population—require assistance.¹ Additionally, women face further restrictions and travel for children in the country remains unsafe. Also, the United Nations (UN) struggles to raise funding for humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan. Global leaders are changing, as US president Donald Trump will replace Joe Biden and as Germany’s government is going to change—all while France and South Korea are in a political crisis. The end to the Assad regime in Syria is also a key factor. Afghanistan and its people stand at a critical moment. These changes could worsen the crisis, but they are also an opportunity for a peaceful and diverse Afghanistan. On December 12, 2024, the UN Security Council met to discuss the situation in Afghanistan. Individuals of the Council repeated their complete help for the UN assistance mission in Afghanistan (Unam) and a special representative of the Secretary General.²

They repeated their strong promise of Afghan freedom, independence, harmony and national strength. They also showed their persistent aid to Afghan people. The Council acknowledged the continuing need to fix the many problems in Afghanistan, along with those associated with a useful source, financial system, social problems, security and terrorism. They also focused on illegal trafficking, negotiations, management, regulations and human rights. The Council spoke mainly about the rights of girls, women and minorities.³

The members of the Council were deeply invested in studying the harmful effects of the Taliban regulations that limit the rights and freedoms of women and girls. They warned that these regulations harm Afghan peace, security and prosperity. They urged the Taliban to quickly abolish these regulations, and a recent ban on training for women and girls at clinical schools. Positive change at this point is important to consider with the current political landscape of Afghanistan.⁴

The Council also pointed out a lack of funding and continued difficulties in getting help to those who need it. They agreed that the Afghan economy faced extreme problems and

required serious aid, and the restoration of banking facilities. In addition, they motioned for the support of the use of valuable US banking funds to help Afghan people. Many corporations are being pushed to offer useful resources in Afghanistan and deliver aid packages.⁵

Emerging Challenges Under Taliban Rule

As the geopolitical scene shifts across the globe, Afghanistan and its people continue to suffer many challenges under the Taliban’s firm rule.

The Taliban have further restricted women’s rights with the “Law on the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice” of August 21st, 2024.⁶ Under this law, Women cannot speak in public, as that is considered immoral. Women need to cover their entire body with clothing and cannot travel without a male relative. This law also extends beyond women. According to the UN, the law dictates that men are required to grow beards, drivers are banned from playing music, and the media is restricted from publishing images of people.⁷

1 “Afghanistan Crisis Response Plan 2024,” IOM, last modified December 12, 2024, <https://crisisresponse.iom.int/response/afghanistan-crisis-response-plan-2024>.

2 “Security Council Press Statement on Afghanistan,” Un.org (United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, December 27, 2024), <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15957.doc.htm>.

3 “Security Council Press Statement on Afghanistan.”

4 “Security Council Press Statement on Afghanistan.”

5 “Security Council Press Statement on Afghanistan.”

6 UN News, “Afghanistan: Condemnation for New Taliban ‘Virtue and Vice’ Order Targeting Women,” UN News, August 27, 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/08/1153631>.

7 UN News, “Afghanistan: Condemnation for New Taliban ‘Virtue and Vice’ Order Targeting Women.”



Women in burqa with their children in Herat, Afghanistan
Credit: Arnesen

On October 4, 2024, the Court of Justice of the European Union, which interprets and rules on EU laws making their rulings binding to all members, held that based on nationality and sex alone, Afghan women can get asylum in the European Union (EU). Because women are stripped of their rights in Afghanistan, they must be allowed to seek shelter in the EU.⁸

At the same time, Afghanistan is ridden with landmines. These landmines claim 50 lives per month, with children often falling victim to them.⁹ Between 2022 and 2024, 1,401 incidents have been reported, 86 percent of which involved children. To address this, the UN cleared 1,172,813 square meters of contaminated land in northern Afghanistan between May and September 2024, making the region safer for its inhabitants.

Still, there has been a funding gap as of October 2024. Only 31.4 percent of 3.06 billion US dollars were provided for humanitarian relief in Afghanistan. This threatens aid programs in the region that have helped manage food insecurity, protracted displacement, and recurrent natural disasters. They also helped with restrictive policies that limit

access to services, particularly for women.¹⁰

Additionally, severe floods occurred at several moments in time from March to November 2024 across the country. These incidents affected thousands of families, resulted in the deaths of many, and aggravated the already difficult humanitarian situation.¹¹ Heavy rain on March 29 and 30 alone destroyed over 500 homes and damaged critical infrastructure in many regions. A landslide also blocked access to health services and disrupted transportation in several villages at the same time. Its effects were felt most strongly in the north, where heavy rainfall had been occurring for several days prior. Similar flash floods and rainfall were observed over the following months in many areas of Afghanistan, with the number of casualties rising week after week.¹² Overall, Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) data shows that over 40,000 homes were affected.

Furthermore, on October 20th, 2024, the BBC reported on new polio cases in Pakistan and Afghanistan. They remain the only countries where the disease still exists.¹³ Polio is a mostly eradicated disease, which spreads primarily through the fecal-

⁸ Court of Justice of the European Union, "CURIA - Documents," curia.europa.eu, October 4, 2024, <https://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf>.

⁹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Afghanistan: Humanitarian Update, October 2024," Unocha.org, November 20, 2024, <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-humanitarian-update-october-2024>.

¹⁰ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Afghanistan: Humanitarian Update, October 2024."

¹¹ "Afghanistan: Floods - Mar 2024," ReliefWeb, accessed January 22, 2025, <https://reliefweb.int/disaster/fl-2024-000038-afg>.

¹² ReliefWeb, "Afghanistan: Floods - Mar 2024."

¹³ Anbarasan Ethirajan, "Polio Cases Surge in Pakistan ahead of Vaccination Campaign," BBC, October 20, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cy890k9knkjo>.

oral route. This means from the feces of one person, through animals or hands, to the mouth of another. It spreads more rarely through contaminated food or water. This means that one affected child represents a danger to all others around them, deeming the eradication of polio in the region an urgent concern.¹⁴

The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan is among the worst in the world. OCHA's September report states that 23.7 million Afghans, or over half of the population, need assistance. The 2024 Afghanistan Human Needs and Response Plan lacks sufficient financing, despite the size and strength of the issue. Barely 40 percent of the USD 3.06 billion that was required has been raised. According to OCHA's October update, this shortage of funding has impacted emergency housing for those who lost their houses to earthquakes and floods, made it more difficult to deliver food relief, and left 3.7 million people without access to healthcare.¹⁵

Afghanistan's human rights situation is also dire, particularly for women and girls. According to UNAMA's most recent report on human rights in the nation, which was released on November 1st and covers the months of July through September, the Taliban have prevented Afghan women and girls from accessing secondary and higher education and continue to restrict their freedom of movement. It also details how, since its approval in late August, Taliban officials have begun to enforce the "Law on the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice." This entails putting authorities in various locations to monitor for rule violations and mailing letters directing female hospital employees to travel to and from work accompanied by a male relative.¹⁶

The Taliban's restrictions on women and girls have recently drawn criticism from several UN representatives. On September 23, Secretary-General António Guterres called on the Taliban to "remove all discriminatory restrictions against women and girls immediately." Otunbayeva called on the Taliban to end the prohibition on girls' education after

the age of 12 in a statement on October 11 in honor of the International Women's Day. "Even greater harm is being done to the lives of women and girls as each day goes by," she cautioned. In its pursuit of peace, healing, and prosperity, Afghanistan may be moving backwards rather than forwards.¹⁷

Relationship with International Community

Human rights violations strained the relationship between Afghanistan and the world. Many countries seek to provide help, and while several others expressed a need for an inclusive and recognized Afghanistan.

The European Council, representing all EU leaders, wants to support Afghan women's rights. It is calling on the Taliban to respect, protect and fulfill all fundamental human rights. It also calls to establish an inclusive government that prevents terrorism in and from the country.¹⁸ With that, the EU is committed to supporting the integration of Afghanistan and helping alleviate the crisis.

Russia, Pakistan, Iran, and China also released a joint statement. On September 27, 2024, the leaders reiterated support for Afghanistan's sovereignty and emphasized non-interference in its internal affairs. They talked of the right of the Afghan people to independently decide their future. At the same time, they reminded the international community of the importance of women's rights, highlighting that women and girls' access opportunities will contribute to peace and stability in the country. They also expressed their desire for a stable and peaceful Afghanistan as their concerns have grown over the state of terrorism in Afghanistan. In particular, the countries condemned ISIL-K's terrorist attacks on pilgrims on 13 September 2024.

The leaders also declared that Afghanistan should reduce its opium cultivation and create conditions that facilitate the return of refugees. They called upon the international

14 "Poliomyelitis," World Health Organization, October 24, 2024, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/poliomyelitis>.
 15 "Afghanistan," December 2024 Monthly Forecast (Security Council Report, December 1, 2024), <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2024-12/afghanistan-27.php>.
 16 "Afghanistan."
 17 "Afghanistan."
 18 Council of the European Union, "Afghanistan: The EU's Response to the Crisis," www.consilium.europa.eu, December 4, 2024, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/afghanistan-eu-response/>.

community to continue providing humanitarian assistance. At the same time, they wish for an uplift in Afghanistan's economy, an end to unilateral sanctions against the country, and the return of its overseas assets.¹⁹

The G7, a group of the Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the High Representative of the European Union, together published a statement including Afghanistan. On November 29th, 2024, the G7 declared that they do not support the treatment women in Afghanistan are subject to and that they will continue to address the humanitarian crisis. They called for a peaceful and integrated Afghanistan that cannot exist without the inclusion of women.²⁰

The international community continues to try to better the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and promises to keep providing humanitarian assistance.²¹

President Donald Trump—who has previously held a very direct, anti-Taliban stance—was elected President of the United States once again. Since his inauguration, he has called for a 90-day suspension of foreign aid. Such a pause can have disastrous effects on Afghanistan, where citizens face immediate challenges.²² Other global issues, such as the war in Ukraine in the Middle East, are expected to be a priority

instead.²³ President Trump may restart negotiations on the Doha Agreement—an agreement made between the US and Afghanistan under his first administration which tried to foster lasting peace in Afghanistan—however, much remains to be seen in that regard.²⁴ Still, it is important to note that President Trump has appointed Marco Rubio and Michael Waltz US Secretary of State and National Security Advisor, respectively. They are both known to be Taliban critics and have called for more pressure on the situation on several occasions.²⁵

With the no-confidence vote in France comes new leaders who will inevitably be charged with Afghanistan.²⁶ Under the previous government, France condemned the treatment of women in Afghanistan and provided humanitarian aid.²⁷ French President Emmanuel Macron was not affected by this vote. With this consolidation, he appointed Francois Bayrou as the new Prime Minister. Hence, a radical change in stance will remain unlikely.²⁸ At the same time, the Foreign Minister remains the same as under the previous Prime Minister, further emphasizing the possibility of an unchanged French opinion on the issue.²⁹

In a similar situation to France, there was a vote of no-confidence on December 16, 2024, in Germany, after which the German government collapsed.³⁰ This suggests that the

19 “Joint Statement Third Quadrilateral Meeting of Foreign Ministers of China, Iran, Pakistan, and Russia_Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, September 27, 2024, https://www.mfa.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjzbzd/202409/t20240930_11501285.html.

20 “G 7 Foreign Ministers’ Meeting Statement,” German Federal Foreign Office, November 29, 2024, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/2688056-2688056>.

21 Council of the European Union, “Afghanistan: The EU’s Response to the Crisis,”; “Joint Statement Third Quadrilateral Meeting of Foreign Ministers of China, Iran, Pakistan, and Russia_Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China,”; German Federal Foreign Office, “G 7 Foreign Ministers’ Meeting Statement.”

22 Charlotte Greenfield, “Aid chief says US aid pause ‘disastrous’ for Afghanistan,” *Reuters*, January 22, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/aid-chief-says-us-aid-pause-disastrous-afghanistan-2025-01-22/>.

23 Masood Saifullah, “What Does Trump’s Election Win Mean for Afghanistan?,” *Deutsche Welle*, November 13, 2024, <https://www.dw.com/en/what-does-trumps-election-win-mean-for-afghanistan/a-70773134>.

24 “Joint Declaration between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States of America for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan,” US Department of State, February 29, 2020, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/02.29.20-US-Afghanistan-Joint-Declaration.pdf>.

25 Masood Saifullah, “What Does Trump’s Election Win Mean for Afghanistan?,”

26 Les Décodeurs, “Censure Du Gouvernement Barnier : Qui Sont Les Députés Qui Ont Voté Pour ?,” *Le Monde*, December 4, 2024, https://www.lemonde.fr/les-decodeurs/article/2024/12/04/motion-de-censure-qui-a-vote-pour-et-contre-le-renversement-du-gouvernement-barnier_6430372_4355770.html.

27 “La Composition Du Gouvernement Michel Barnier,” Gouvernement Français, September 21, 2024, <https://de.ambafrance.org/La-composition-du-Gouvernement-Michel-Barnier>; “Afghanistan - Situation of Women (5 Dec. 2024),” France Diplomacy - Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, December 5, 2024, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/afghanistan/news/article/afghanistan-situation-of-women-5-dec-2024>.

28 “Macron Hat Entschieden - Neuer Premierminister in Frankreich: Wofür Steht François Bayrou - Und Kann Er Die Politische Blockade Überwinden?,” *Deutschlandfunk*, December 15, 2024, <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/neuer-premierminister-in-frankreich-wofuer-steht-fran-ois-bayrou-und-kann-er-die-politische-blockade-100.html>.

29 “La Composition Du Gouvernement de François Bayrou,” Gouvernement Français, December 23, 2024, <https://www.info.gouv.fr/actualite/la-composition-du-gouvernement-de-francois-bayrou>.

30 Deutsche Welle, “German Election: Scholz Loses Confidence Vote,” *Deutsche Welle*, December 16, 2024, <https://www.dw.com/en/german-election-scholz-loses-confidence-vote/live-71063891>.



Syrians in Germany celebrate Fall of Assad Regime, December 8, 2024
 Credit: Shark1989z

new votes can change Germany’s stance on Afghanistan. Under Olaf Scholz, the government continued to provide humanitarian aid.³¹ Now, Germany’s efforts are focused on both promoting human rights and providing humanitarian assistance. Germany continues to not recognize the Taliban as the government of Afghanistan.³² According to estimates, the conservative Christian Democratic Union will gain the most votes, meaning they will be able to appoint the next German chancellor, in which case Friedrich Merz would likely take on the role.³³ He did not publicly speak of Afghanistan, but after a deadly attack in Solingen, Germany, he proposed to restart deportations of Afghan nationals, which can only be possible if Afghanistan is classed as a safe country. This would mean that the Merz-led government could talk with the Taliban or Afghanistan’s neighboring countries to be able to deport migrants.³⁴

31 Auswärtiges Amt, “Germany and Afghanistan: Bilateral Relations,” German Federal Foreign Office, September 25, 2024, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/afghanistan/209228>.

32 Auswärtiges, “Germany and Afghanistan: Bilateral Relations.”

33 Philipp Guttman, “Bundestagswahl: Neueste Wahlumfragen Im Wahltrend,” DAWUM, December 5, 2024, <https://dawum.de/Bundestag/>.

34 Philip Raillon, “Sind Die Asyl-Forderungen von Merz Rechtlich Umsetzbar?,” *Tagesschau*, August 29, 2024, <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/innenpolitik/merz-asyl-migration-cdu-grenzkontrollen-eu-dublin-100.html>.

35 Angela Stent et al., “The Assad Regime Falls. What Happens Now?,” Brookings, December 9, 2024, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-assad-regime-falls-what-happens-now/>.

36 “IEA-MoFA Statement Regarding the Recent Developments in Syria – Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan,” Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2024, <https://mfa.gov.af/en/18019>.

37 Milad Sayar, “Afghan Politicians See Assad’s Fall as Warning to Taliban | Amu TV,” Amu TV, December 8, 2024, <https://amu.tv/142441/>.

38 Siyar Sirat, “Fall of Syria’s Assad Sparks Comparisons with Afghanistan | Amu TV,” Amu TV, December 9, 2024, <https://amu.tv/142596/>.

39 Frances Mao, “Why Has South Korea’s President Suddenly Declared Martial Law?,” *BBC*, December 3, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c0lgw1pw5zpo>.

On December 8, 2024, the Assad regime in Syria fell.³⁵ Afterwards, the Taliban congratulated the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham—the terrorist group that freed Syria. The Taliban hoped that the power shift was going to be aligned with the Syrian people and also hoped for an independent Islamic government, fostering unity among all Syrians.³⁶ This major event could influence the situation in Afghanistan and sway public opinion, possibly encouraging the Afghan people to revolt.³⁷ The ripple effect the situation in Syria could create across the Middle East remains to be seen.³⁸

On December 3, the president of South Korea, Yoon Suk Yeol, declared martial law. This started protests in the country, which led the lawmakers to vote to end martial law very quickly after it was announced.³⁹ On December 14, the president was impeached, with the Constitutional Court ultimately deciding

his fate in office. If the court validates the impeachment, there will be a new presidential vote.⁴⁰ The court can take up to six months to decide, meaning that global positions may shift significantly before a conclusion is reached.⁴¹ Still, before the impeachment, the country continued providing humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, providing USD 74 million from 2021 to 2023.⁴²

Conclusion

Afghanistan is still in a crisis, but the context is changing.⁴³ Still, the Taliban continue oppressing minorities, particularly women.⁴⁴ The global community strives for a peaceful and sustainable Afghanistan, which is impossible without safeguarding the rights of all.⁴⁵ The country is marked by war and instability, but the international community continues to provide asylum and humanitarian assistance in efforts of building peace and stability.⁴⁶

Despite the numerous obstacles Afghanistan faces, there are always ways to advance. With millions in need of food, housing, and medical attention, the humanitarian crisis is still very serious. Landmines and natural calamities make living even more difficult, and restrictive laws continue to harm women and girls. However, there is uncertainty over foreign backing. Concerns over the future of aid are raised by funding shortages and changing political agendas in the US, Europe, and other countries.

There is still hope in Afghanistan despite these challenges. The world's nations are still supporting and advocating for human rights. Global policies may potentially change because of the overthrow of the Assad administration in Syria and political developments elsewhere. Despite adversity, the Afghan people have proven to be incredibly resilient. Afghanistan still can strive for stability, security, and a brighter future with

sustained international involvement and robust humanitarian initiatives. The delegates of the security council must select what role they will play in this involvement.

⁴⁰ Nectar Gan and Gawon Bae, "A President Facing Both Impeachment and an Insurrection Probe – What's next for Yoon Suk Yeol?," CNN, December 17, 2024, <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/12/16/asia/south-korea-yoon-what-next-explainer-intl-hnk/index.html>.

⁴¹ Nectar Gan and Gawon Bae, "A President Facing Both Impeachment and an Insurrection Probe – What's next for Yoon Suk Yeol?"

⁴² Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea, "ROK Government Hosts Meeting with UN Organizations Regarding Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan View," news release, October 17, 2024, https://overseas.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5676/view.do?seq=322696.

⁴³ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Afghanistan: Humanitarian Update, October 2024."

⁴⁴ UN News, "Afghanistan: Condemnation for New Taliban 'Virtue and Vice' Order Targeting Women."

⁴⁵ Council of the European Union, "Afghanistan: The EU's Response to the Crisis."

⁴⁶ Court of Justice of the European Union, "CURIA - Documents." ; Council of the European Union, "Afghanistan: The EU's Response to the Crisis."

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