



MUN Background Guide

World Hunger Prevention and Measures (SDG 2, 16)

Issue & Committee's Focus

Should the UN interfere with a country's policies and internal affairs to end world hunger?

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Introduction

World hunger remains one of the most persistent global challenges, with millions lacking reliable access to adequate and nutritious food despite decades of international assistance. While traditional United Nations humanitarian aid has saved countless lives, it has often provided only temporary relief and, in some cases, failed to reach intended populations due to weak governance, corruption, armed conflict, or authoritarian control. In extreme situations, food aid has reportedly been diverted for political or military purposes, raising concerns about the effectiveness of aid delivery under oppressive regimes. This dilemma places the international community at a crossroads between respecting state sovereignty and upholding the fundamental human right to food. The committee must examine whether, and to what extent, the United Nations should intervene in the internal affairs of states when government actions or inaction contribute to widespread hunger, balancing humanitarian imperatives with the principles of international law. Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights stated: “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care and necessary social services...”

This committee is intended to discuss the enduring debate on where the boundaries should be drawn between “internal affairs” and human rights infringements, for which the only solution demands external intervention. It is widely accepted that the criminal code applies to family domestic violence, and the status of being a family member does not waive criminal liability. Delegates are prompted to consider does this analogy also apply to war tormented countries, whose governments failed to perform their duties of providing food due to the entire country being



entangled in war, and when governments denying food to its citizens. UN, as the entrusted global body of governance, is it allowed to intervene in such scenarios?

Aspects for Consideration/Historical Context

Article 2(1) of the UN Charter indicates the principle of Non-Intervention: “The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members.” It should be highlighted that the UN Security Council (UNSC) is entitled to issue sanctions in response to grave human rights violations, provided they are deemed a threat to or breach of international peace and security. This authority is justified by the UN Charter, specifically Chapter VII, Article 41.

Historically and currently, armed conflicts are seldom not accompanied by a food security crisis. In peacetime, authoritarian regimes often neglect/deny food access to their citizens. The United Nations had conducted interventions when certain countries' internal unrest/external conflict had threatened food security, regrettably, several interventions became ineffective due to limited useful diplomatic means to facilitate a change in the situation. Below, delegates could find the UN's past actions regarding interventions due to the food security crisis.

When delegates are drafting the position paper and preparing for debates during the conference, it is recommended that a coherent standing point be established with supporting evidence. A good position paper should be well backed with evidence (e.g., statistics, past resolutions/actions). The following questions could provide a starting point:

- In the shoes of my assigned country, what actions are expected to be taken?



- What has my assigned country done in the past to address this issue?
- Do my proposed actions contradict my country's culture and current policies?
- Why should my proposed actions be favoured by other delegates? How will it appeal to them? Does it benefit their interests?

When delegates are conducting research on the assigned countries, it is critical that the proposed solutions are aligned with the country's political stands, cultural background, and economic situations. A country with a regime recently seizing power via coup d'état, or junta/authoritarian regime, is not normally expected to propose a sudden policy opening for international NGO oversight on its government, nor are they always willing to opening boarder for external aid or inspection. A country with a strong historical struggle against dictatorship, and currently with a stable and democratic government, is very unlikely to be backing proposals undermining international law enforcement on the human right of food access. In the case of a country currently involved in armed conflict, please consider its past record and attitude towards foreign aid. The statements made in the position paper and during the conference should not be contradictory with current policy of the country assigned.

UN Past Actions

1. Syria — Security Council authorized cross-border deliveries without host-state consent (Res. 2165 and follow-ups, 2014 onward).
The UNSC unanimously authorised UN cross-border humanitarian access through several border crossings (Turkey, Jordan, Iraq) to reach populations that the Syrian authorities would not allow to be reached. This used the



Council's Chapter VII authority to permit aid deliveries across front lines without Syrian government consent and established monitoring. It was a precedent for bypassing state consent where access was being blocked.

2. Sudan / Operation Lifeline Sudan (1989–2005) and later Darfur access pressures.

After the 1980s famine in southern Sudan, an international humanitarian operation (Operation Lifeline Sudan) was set up that negotiated directly with both government and rebel parties to deliver aid. In Darfur (2003–2010s), the Sudanese government repeatedly blocked or siphoned aid; international pressure, UNSC statements, and the later AU-UN hybrid mission sought to create access and protection for relief operations. These examples show negotiated parallel channels and international pressure to reduce obstruction.

3. Ethiopia (Tigray) — humanitarian diplomacy, Security Council meetings, and calls for unimpeded access.

In Tigray (2020–2022/23), the UN combined appeals, humanitarian negotiations with federal and regional authorities, Security Council briefings/pressures, and conditionality from donors to try to get sustained food access; access remained episodic, highlighting both the value and limits of diplomacy and donor leverage.

Key Terms

1. Sovereignty – A state's authority over its internal affairs without external interference.
2. Chapter VII – UN Security Council powers to take binding action to address threats to peace.
3. Humanitarian Access – Ability of aid agencies to reach civilians and deliver assistance.
4. Cross-Border Aid – Aid delivered without host government consent from outside the country.



5. Aid Diversion – Misuse or redirection of humanitarian aid away from civilians.
6. Humanitarian Principles – Humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence guide aid work.
7. Humanitarian Exemptions – Sanctions carve-outs allowing food and medical assistance.
8. Food Security – Reliable access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food.
9. Obstruction of Aid – Deliberate blocking or manipulation of humanitarian assistance.
10. Responsibility to Protect (R2P) – International duty to act when a state fails to protect its population.

References and Citations

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2. <https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/countries/sudan/peace-justice-humanitarian-aid>
3. <https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2165%282014%29>
4. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>