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DESIGNERS:
SALONI SHELKE
VIDHITA JAIN
KAASHVI KAPOOR
RISHAAYA KAKAR

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EDITORS:
ASHNA AGGARWAL
ARMAAN KAPOOR
AMBREEN SIDHU
RUBAB KHATRA

Tackling the Tension between Immunity and Impunity in regards to UN Peacekeeping Forces

The first day of the Model United Nations Conference witnessed a riveting and intense debate in the United Nations General Assembly VI, on the agenda of “Criminal Accountability of Peacekeeping Forces of the UN.” Delegates came together to passionately discuss and dissect cross-relations issues with a special focus on the effectiveness of the UN Peacekeeping Forces.

One of the highlights of the day was an insightful look into the zero-tolerance policy, which states that wrongdoers must be presented with pre-determined punishments regardless of subjective circumstances. The Delegate of Honduras suggested the JRP method—Justice, Repetition and Prevention—of trying those accused of committing crimes whilst in deployment.



The delegate of India painted an incredibly revealing picture of the UAE’s remarkably low crime rate of 0.66% as an example to follow, inquiring how the UAE had managed to maintain such a low crime rate and whether there were any insights that could be applied to ensure accountability within peacekeeping missions. The delegate of UAE attributed its low crime rate to various factors, including strong law enforcement, strict implementation of laws, social cohesion, and robust community engagement. They emphasised that the UAE government places a high priority on security measures and invests heavily in training its law enforcement personnel.

The Delegate of Republic of Korea talked about the pattern of sexual abuse and how peacekeepers are exempted from punishment on the basis of impunity, a stance supported by an overwhelming majority of delegates.

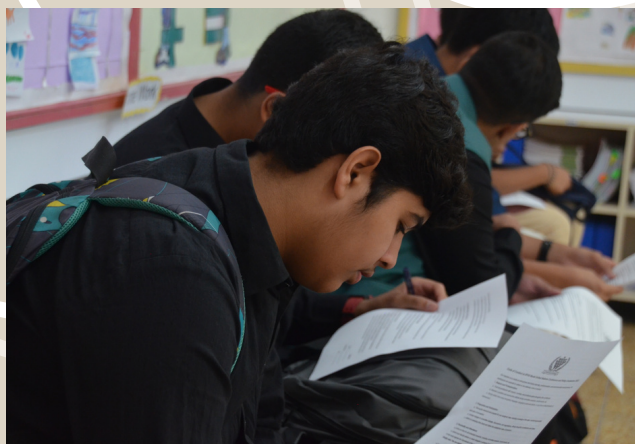


Amidst the intense diplomatic jargon, the delegate of the United Kingdom claimed that the UN peacekeepers in Haiti sexually exploited women for food; the same people they had initially sworn to protect. The Delegate of Argentina expressed that it was a fundamental betrayal of trust and an ongoing failure to protect the civilians. This leads us to doubting the credibility of the UN and how it upholds its principles. They also stated that Argentina has sent over 40,000 personnel in peacekeeping missions. The Delegate of Ghana shed some more light on the zero-tolerance policy and how instances of crime are going unpunished and suggested the establishment of an independent body in the UN for the prosecution of such crimes.

Throughout the day, the committee remained engaged in passionate deliberations, touching upon various aspects of the issue. Some delegates emphasised the need for transparent reporting mechanisms to address misconduct effectively. Others proposed the establishment of an independent body to investigate allegations against peacekeeping personnel, ensuring impartiality in the process.

As the day drew to a close, the committees discussions had not reached a consensus, as expected in the initial stages of an MUN conference. However, the debates set the stage for further discussions in the upcoming sessions. Delegates expressed their commitment to finding common ground and formulating comprehensive solutions to enhance the accountability of peacekeeping forces. The first day of the MUN proved to be a promising start, offering valuable insights with engaging debates. The diplomacy of the delegates was par excellence, showcasing grit and zeal to find solutions that reflect the principles of the United Nations.

-Priyanjali Goyal



Are they the Traps of Debt or are they the Traps of the West?

To introduce the committee, the World Economic Forum (WEF) is an international organisation that brings political leaders, business executives, academics, and other influential figures worldwide to discuss and shape global, regional, and industry agendas. It was founded in 1971 and is established in Geneva, Switzerland. The primary goal of the World Economic Forum is to improve the state of the world by engaging leaders from various sectors in collaborative efforts to address pressing global challenges. The organisation arranges an annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, where participants discuss multiple topics, including economics, technology, environment, geopolitics, and social issues.

The committee began with a buzz of excitement among the delegates, ready to challenge themselves, engage in meaningful debate, gather experiences, and forge alliances both in and outside the committee. The head of state of Ireland started strongly, making it loud and clear on how they felt that no one would agree with the debt trap policy; thereby, heated discussions began with other countries joining in forging opinions just as firmly. The World Economic Forum committee session started with a bang, and there was no doubt that this would be a debate to remember.

The executive board began the formalities explaining all the rules, regulations, and procedures to be followed. Without much ado, the hands of various delegates raised with exhilaration, more than willing to make a mark and cement their authority. A majority vote agreed upon the motion for an Unmoderated caucus, with Ireland immediately taking the lead, talking passionately about the causes of inequality, believing that you could only understand a problem by understanding the causes. Russia, however, wanted to emphasise the importance of globalisation and digitalisation despite numerous delegates not believing it to be pertinent, stating it can only be afforded by developed countries.



Given the variance of opinion amongst the delegates, Russia no doubt felt the heat of disagreement. Creating alliances, the committee was soon split into two blocs of countries with similar viewpoints. Without skipping a heartbeat, the heat directed towards Russia was quickly faced by China, given the country's debt trap policy; debt-trap diplomacy states that an international financial relationship where a creditor country or institution extends debt to a borrowing nation partially or solely to increase the lender's political leverage.

The Delegate of Sri Lanka raised a motion for the General Speakers List (GSL), which began with the delegate of Brazil. Brazil deemed debt traps directly linked to global inequality, for the rich keep getting richer and the poor poorer. The diplomat spoke about the generosity of Brazil, donating 25 billion dollars in education to reduce economic inequality, believing we could overcome this hurdle through a joint effort to raise funds and effectively utilise them for a better future. South Korea and New Zealand had similar stances on what they spoke about – believing that economic equality was a birthright and organisations must be created to work with the government to have a more significant impact.

A compelling stance came forward with Russia stating that the " Problems of the West were the problems of the world, but the East had to always solve their problems on their own". The United Kingdom and the United States backed the West by declaring that the West had provided aid to the Eastern countries on several occasions. Another sentiment that caused heated discussion was between China and Germany, for Germany had questioned China by accusing the government of using the Sri Lankan port for their sole benefit. China stated in its defence that China had seized the Sri Lanka port as it was on lease.

Moving towards the motion of discussion of the plethora of cases of inequality, with most of the countries believing the leading cause to be technical advancements, destitution and educational disparity, Germany spoke of job polarisation, referring to the polarisation of the labour force when middle-class jobs—requiring a moderate level of skills, like autoworkers' jobs—seem to disappear relative to those at the bottom, requiring few skills, and those at the top, requiring greater skill levels. With more back and forths among the delegates and a few laughs with the Executive Board, the committee was concluded and the delegates decided upon discussing the economic effects of COVID-19 for the proceeding day.

-Maysha Singla



From Aggression to Resolution: Tracing the Arc of Armed Conflict in Russia and Ukraine

“If wars can be started by lies, they can be stopped by truth.” - Julian Assange

25th of March 2022, the day two fair countries were thrown into an excruciating realm of torment.

Chornobaivka airbase near Kherson, which is being used as a temporary base by the Russian forces, was attacked by Ukrainian missile strikes. It has caused a colossal amount of destruction. According to reports, The commander of the 49th Combined Army, Lt. General Yakov Rezantsev was brutally killed in the attack. While the cabinet of Russia had dissent among its own members. The Russian Cabinet believed that the voices of the bereaved Russians weren't heard while Ukrainians received all the sympathy.

The Wagner Group launched drone strikes in the city of Kharkiv which is controlled by the Russian Military. Around 15 Russian soldiers of the 6th Combined Arms Army of The Russian Federation were killed and around 23 were injured. Seeking revenge for their fallen comrades. Soldiers from the 6th Combined Arms Army killed 9 Wagner Mercenaries. According to intel gathered by Army General 2, they have found out that someone in this committee has tried to contact the Ukrainian War Cabinet. After this blunder of disloyalty, the Army general firmly stated that it was time for the air force to step in and take advantage of the situation .”With loss came the power to strike when the iron is hot .” Russia prepared to strengthen the military strife by increasing the bombing rates in Kyiv .

So, In retaliation, a Russian bombardment campaign was launched on the Ukrainian city of Vinnytsia, which houses the headquarters of the Ukrainian Air Force. The Headquarters were demolished resulting in the loss of Ukraine's capability of launching any more air attacks.

After a heated discussion, the Air Force Captain 1 from the Ukraine Cabinet suggested the establishment of an airbase in Lviv whilst shifting the civilians to rural areas to empty the main cities. The resources needed for such a big construction project were to be provided by Western Countries like Netherlands and Denmark as per the Danish Law. This suggestion was questioned by the Executive Board wherein, they were concerned about the manforce required in such a refugee operation and how Ukraine could afford this when there was a huge requirement for people to fight the war. The Air Force Captain 1 answered by stating their plan of action to utilise half the population for war whilst giving refuge to the other half.

Just when the situation was getting even, the Navy Admiral, from the Ukraine Cabinet gave news of a naval vessel that has been sent to Ukraine from Russia. Ukraine has decided to detain this vessel as it is suspected to house spies from the Russian side to send information about the Ukrainian military tactics.

The committee session ended with both the Cabinets pondering over military tactics whilst keeping in mind the safety of their civilians.

**-Arshia Sachdeva
-Ishita Kohli**



Policy Contention

In the Policy Debate, participants discussed the SITA-All India Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act. They focused on the aspects of how women and young girls are oppressed in India.

The affirmative team began by explaining that in 1950 the Government of India ratified the International Convention for the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of others. In 1956 India passed the Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act, 1956. They spoke about the illegality of prostitution and the punishment for owning any such related establishment.

After that, the negative team talked about how the act only spoke about the protection of women and young girls with no mention of how men were also sexually abused and raped. They said that there was discrimination based on sex and that 20-40 years was not enough jail time for a rape case. They spoke about Ram Rahim and his many rape cases. The time spent in jail and their bail was based on the quality of their lawyer.

The affirmative team said that if any person was involved in any phase of the chain activities like recruiting, transporting, transferring, harbouring, or receiving people for the purpose of prostitution is also liable to be punished. They continued saying that if a person is found guilty of involving a child in any such activity, he/she is punishable by law and may be imprisoned.

To which the negative team stated that countless rape cases every year go unreported. They said that this Bill punishes trafficking for the purpose of prostitution. Trafficking for other purposes (such as bonded labour and domestic work) are not covered by the Bill.

-Neeti Bansal



Rajasthan Health Bill

The Rajasthan Health Bill has become a subject of intense debate, with stakeholders on both sides presenting compelling arguments regarding the future of healthcare in the state.

The affirmative side firmly believes that the Bill holds the key to breaking the cycle of poverty and misery faced by Rajasthan's population. By recognizing health as a fundamental right, the Bill advocates for the prudent allocation of taxpayers' money to ensure better healthcare access for all citizens. Proponents assert that healthier individuals are more productive, leading to an improved overall societal output and economic growth.

Moreover, the Bill stresses the importance of collaboration between the private and government sectors. By forging strategic partnerships, advocates argue that the healthcare system can benefit from the private sector's efficiency and innovation while maintaining a focus on affordability and accessibility to the masses. They emphasise that by embracing diversity and catering to the contrasting backgrounds of the people, the Bill promises to bring positive change to the lives of all Rajasthan residents, irrespective of their socio-economic status.

Conversely, the negative side of the debate raises valid concerns that must be addressed before the Bill is enacted. They argue that Rajasthan already has several healthcare schemes in place, leading to a potential overlap of initiatives and administrative inefficiencies. Additionally, they highlight the challenge of increasing the healthcare budget, as it could strain the state's finances and lead to other crucial sectors being underfunded.

One major contention from the private sector is the issue of delayed reimbursement in previous schemes. If this problem persists in the new Bill, it might deter private healthcare providers from participating in the initiative, leading to a suboptimal healthcare system. Critics also assert that the government should avoid excessive regulation of the private sector and instead encourage transparency in billing practices and the promotion of discounts or basic medical treatments.

Furthermore, the negative side highlights that the Bill may infringe on the rights granted under Article 19, impacting the freedom of private healthcare practitioners and institutions. They argue that any policy that restricts individual liberties should be carefully evaluated to avoid unintended consequences.

In conclusion, the Rajasthan Health Bill is a significant policy proposal that requires careful consideration of all perspectives. While the affirmative side champions the potential for transformative change and upliftment of the population, the negative side raises important concerns regarding practicality, feasibility, and potential negative consequences. Striking a balance between public health advancement and private sector concerns is imperative to create an effective and sustainable healthcare policy for the state, ultimately benefiting all citizens of Rajasthan. A thorough evaluation and inclusive dialogue among stakeholders will be vital in shaping the future of healthcare in the state.

-Siddharta Jain



Criminal Laws Amendment Act; 2013

The Nirbhaya Act, also known as the Nirbhaya Act of India, has been the subject of intense debate and discussion due to its profound impact on society and its efforts to address sexual harassment and heinous crimes against women. On the affirmative side of the contention, supporters laud the act for its explicit recognition of sexual harassment as one of the most heinous crimes, emphasizing the need to prioritize its prosecution. By placing sexual harassment at the forefront, the act sends a strong message about the seriousness of this offense and society's commitment to combat it effectively.

Moreover, the act's expansion of the definition of "rape" to include various forms of penetration, such as any object, oral sex, and insertion of any body part, is considered a significant step towards making the legal framework more comprehensive and inclusive. This broadened definition aims to ensure that all forms of sexual violence are recognized and appropriately punished, thereby providing better protection for victims and deterring potential offenders. The act's extension of sentences for sexual harassment and acid attacks is seen as crucial in reflecting the gravity of these crimes. By lengthening the sentences from the previous seven years to ten years or even life imprisonment, the act aims to impose harsher penalties, thereby acting as a potential deterrent to offenders and strengthening the deterrent effect of the law.

Additionally, the introduction of fast-track codes courts in the Act is applauded as it expedites trials and ensures that justice is served swiftly. This is particularly important in rape cases, where delays in the legal process can lead to prolonged suffering for victims. By prioritizing rape trials, the Act seeks to reduce the time victims have to wait for justice, thus offering them a greater sense of closure and resolution.

The Act's acknowledgment of electronic offences, such as stalking and sexually explicit messages, is another crucial aspect that is appreciated. With the increasing use of technology in perpetrating crimes, recognizing and addressing cybercrimes is essential in the modern age, and the act takes a step towards meeting this challenge. By ensuring that images of private parts are shown only with the victim's consent, the act prevents further victimisation of survivors through the media, respecting their right to dignity and privacy.

Lastly, supporters highlight the act's positive impact on society, transforming attitudes towards sexual harassment and crimes against women. The Nirbhaya Act has served as a beacon of hope, inspiring positive change in societal norms and encouraging open discussions about the pressing issue of violence against women.



On the negative side of the contention, critics raise several concerns about the Nirbhaya Act. One major criticism is the perceived discrimination against men, as the Act tends to overlook female perpetrators and portrays men solely as victimizers.

This view runs contrary to the principles of gender neutrality in justice and highlights the importance of considering all perspectives to ensure fairness and balance in the legal framework. The implementation of the Act has been a point of contention as well. Immediate availability of the act led to retroactive application, resulting in some offenders receiving milder sentences under the old laws. This inconsistency in justice delivery raises concerns about the fairness and uniformity of the legal system.

Inefficient implementation and lack of sufficient rehabilitation processes, such as counseling and legal aid for victims, are other areas of criticism. For the Nirbhaya Act to be truly effective, it must not only focus on punishment but also prioritize the rehabilitation and support of survivors to help them heal and reintegrate into society.

The Act's failure to address marital rape is another significant concern. By excluding marital rape from its purview, the Act leaves a substantial gap in protecting women's rights within the institution of marriage. Critics argue that any legislation aiming to combat violence against women must comprehensively address all forms of violence, including within marital relationships.

Perhaps one of the most significant criticisms of the Nirbhaya Act is the lack of gender-neutral terms and the exclusion of LGBTQ+ and other marginalised individuals from its protection. By solely focusing on women's safety, the Act fails to acknowledge that sexual harassment and gender-based violence can affect individuals of all genders and sexual orientations, thus undermining the broader concept of justice and inclusion.

In conclusion, striking a balance between protecting women's rights and ensuring justice for all in society is crucial.

-Siddharta Jain



From Amendments to Action: US Senate's Intense Debate on School Shootings

In an electrifying session that unfolded on July 21, 2023, the US Senate became the battleground for an intense discussion on the agenda: “Federal gun laws with special emphasis on school shootings.”

The respected chair started the session by calling for a vote on the format for the session through which a Model United Nations (MUN) format won with a clear majority against a Senate-style proceeding. Upon which, as per custom, attendance was carried out with the notable absence of Colorado, Oklahoma, Mississippi and Missouri, a few states with the highest firearm mortality rate. This led to a 10-minute party caucus through which John Fetterman was chosen as the Democratic Party Leader who was opposed by Ted Cruz as the Republican Leader. The motion for a formal debate was introduced by the Democratic Party leader on the federal gun laws with special emphasis on school shootings with a 90-second speaking time per speaker. The General Speakers List or the GSL consisted of states such as Vermont, North Carolina, California, Texas, Massachusetts, and Florida which ultimately culminated with Alabama. The Senator of Kentucky, a prominent Republican state, repeatedly protected gun rights by very notably supporting the notion that people must buy guns to make themselves feel safer as well as going on to argue that Kentucky, as a state, will fight to retain their gun rights.

Some states such as Vermont, North Carolina, Massachusetts and Wisconsin aim to find the middle ground between the greater public interest and safety and protect citizens' rights as per the 2nd amendment. The representative from Nebraska highlighted their ancestors' role in achieving freedom using firearms and argued that the problem lies not with guns themselves but with individuals misusing them. They sought measures to close loopholes while maintaining their stance on preserving gun rights.



Most Senators agreed on the importance of Mental Health and were united in wanting to close constitutional loopholes; however, the crescendo of the session reached its peak during the motion to deliberate on the prevention of school shootings. With each speaker allotted a mere 120 seconds to make their case, time was of the essence as they presented an array of solutions.

Maryland brought attention to the term 'self-defence' and raised the alarm regarding its ambiguity and advocated reforming this definition constitutionally because it is a dangerous loophole exploited by some to justify their actions. The Senator of Tennessee who spoke again about online gun sales got into a very intense debate with the Senator of Pennsylvania regarding the relevance of online sales which ultimately culminated in a gavel waning by the chair. The Senator of Massachusetts came up with innovative solutions to develop AI technology to monitor gun sales online while advocating for the removal of the "Brady Handgun Loophole". North Carolina was a very ardent supporter of mental health who also came up with making sure to conduct frequent psychological examinations of gun owners to protect the public interest.

Senator Ted Cruz of Texas however had very opposing views and believed that gun bans do not work citing Chicago as an example. He also went on to appreciate Red Flag Laws and complemented New Hampshire for their removal of Red Flag Laws. His final argument consisted of the idea that a larger number of gun-free zones give rise to more gun violence and that the lesser the number of gun-free zones, the lesser the casualty caused by gun violence. This led to a sparked argument between the Senators of New York and Texas in the filibuster.

This brought about the end of Day 1 of the US Senate, leaving the chambers buzzing with the resonance of intense discussions about the root causes and far-reaching problems caused by gun violence. As the sun set on the horizon, it became evident that the session had not only ignited a fervent exchange of ideas but also triggered a moment of deep introspection.

The varying viewpoints of states across the US highlighted the complexities of finding a unified solution to the deeply entrenched issue of gun violence. From spirited defences of Second Amendment rights to passionate calls for stronger regulations, the Senate's deliberations underscored the multi-faceted nature of this pressing challenge and as Day 2 approaches, everyone waits with anticipation, eager to witness the unfolding chapters of this critical debate.

-Vaasvi Kuthiala



From Amendments to Action: US Senate's Intense Debate on School Shootings

In a world where evolution is a necessity, we find the addition of a growing digital one. To reflect on this fact, the United Nations Security Council sat in session, contemplating the role of Artificial Intelligence and Militant drones in modern-day warfare and defence systems.

To kick off the committee procedures, all present delegates spoke on the General Speakers List. The Delegate of France was the first to express support for the ban against AI-based weaponry, stating that limitations and conditionalities would not serve the purpose. Other delegates, such as those of Ecuador and Albania, agreed that weapons capable of such large-scale destruction require strict policies and conditions to uphold human ethics and prevent any potential threats, such as civilian casualties and misuse of technology.

The delegate of China presented a completely different stance, explaining the various opportunities for scientific and technological advancement that could accompany the development of militant drones and AI-led weaponry. The delegate endorsed the responsible use of artificial intelligence, along with diligent care for regulations and restrictions that promote its ethical application. This opinion was opposed by the delegate of The United Kingdom, who strongly believed that fully autonomous weapons systems are harbingers of death and destruction, capable of causing unintentional wars and fostering an arms race worse than ever witnessed before. They viewed such weaponry as being 'programmed to kill' and possessing 'too much power to fall into the wrong hands.' Consequently, they recommended a complete ban on all semi-autonomous and fully autonomous intelligent weapons and drones.

The committee further discussed the ethical implications of autonomous weaponry, debating upon the aspects of humanity within war. The Delegate of the United States of America emphasised how semi-autonomous weapons nullify concerns of casualties or morality, keeping control with the people behind the machines. They also stressed how artificial intelligence can be used to self-regulate and is an essential tool in any nation's defence and military arsenal.

During the course of the discussion, drones and weapons directed by artificial intelligence were compared to biological and chemical warfare, which need to be quelled before they have a chance to cause any irrevocable damage to global security. They were referred to as machines of mass murder without moral, ethical, and legal implications, entirely capable of being exploited and acting with a mind of their own.

The Delegate of Russia reiterated that a complete ban on such weapon systems would not be justified, as military drones have proven to be more efficient and have saved many lives through surveillance and reconnaissance.

Delegates of Switzerland, Gabon, and Mozambique shared concerns over these systems being used against the causes of international peace and security, raising questions of responsibility and accountability once again. The Delegates of the United States and China shed light on how non-state actors and private entities would still pose a threat to peacekeeping nations. These actors having their own advanced defence systems would be their best strategy.

The day's proceedings ended with an idea of progress and a commitment to further deliberation to reach a common intent.

-Sanjula Kapur

"MUN Showdown: Delegates of India and China Clash in Intense Debate!"

The UNHCR convened a session to address the ongoing catastrophe that is the Sudan Refugee Crisis, an issue that has sparked political unrest, economic decline and ethnic strife since the two years since the partition of Sudan and South Sudan. The committee session commenced with the delegate of Kenya throwing light on the impact of the Sudan Refugee Crisis not only on Sudan, but its neighbouring countries as well. It was brought to the attention of the committee that the majority of the countries neighbouring Sudan are in fact facing economic challenges themselves, thus making it difficult—if not impossible—for them to provide amenities to the Sudanese refugees. The majority of the member nations pitched in, expressing their agreement on the matter, yet almost no delegate backed away from promising humanitarian aid and facilities to better the lives of the Sudanese refugees.

The delegate of India had a fascinating yet controversial take on the matter. Initially showing sympathy towards the IDPs and Sudanese refugees, they eventually delved into a matter of India's personal interest, reporting that roughly 3000 Indian citizens are currently stranded in Sudan and how India intends to launch an operation to put an end to this problem. The operation would involve the deployment of the Indian Navy's INS Sumedha, a stealth offshore patrol vessel, in addition to two air force operations. Furthermore, the delegate of India voiced their opinions on the placement of refugee camps, urging that the refugee camps be set up in areas which are relatively harder to reach. They stressed the essential involvement of developed nations on the matter, throwing light on how efforts of the developed nations could make a much more significant contribution to the matter.

This speech was interpreted by the People's Republic of China as selfish. China called out India, saying that India's plan of action implied care and concern only for the citizens of India, not taking into account the international implications at stake. Pointing out that India's approach was rather uncaring, the delegate held the belief that if India could evacuate Indian civilians from Sudan, it should be able to evacuate Sudanese refugees as well in the interest of human rights for all.

India refused to deny that the citizens of India were in fact their priority, announcing that their safety was of their utmost concern. The discussion was brought to an end by India enumerating on their plan to provide assistance to the Sudanese refugees, who they would assuredly be organising rescue operations for in the future whilst placing their own brethren first and foremost.

This intense atmosphere was brought to an end as the UNHCR's session drew towards an end. Through this clash for the ages, delegates were able to highlight not only the plight of the stranded refugees but also the attitude of the nations towards this crisis. Moreover, rescue operations which were brought up in this session represented a possible solution to this crisis, which could hopefully signal a beacon of hope for all the innocent people caught in the crossfire.

-Rupika Kumar

