

2nd ECOFIN

*General
Assembly*



TOPICS: Food Security in Africa, Control of
Natural Resources in Occupied Syrian Golan
Heights

CHAIR: Marisa Khurana

LAIMUN XXVII

December 4-5



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Letter from the Secretaries-General

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of our entire staff, it is our pleasure to welcome you to Session XXVII of the Los Angeles Invitational Model United Nations (LAIMUN) conference. LAIMUN XXVII will take place on Saturday, December 4 and Sunday, December 5 of 2021 at the Mira Costa High School (MCHS) campus.

Our staff, composed of over 100 MCHS students, has been working tirelessly to make your debate experience the best it can be. You will find your dais members to be knowledgeable about the issues being debated and MUN procedure. We pride ourselves in hosting a conference that is educational and engaging, and we hope you take advantage of that as you prepare and debate.

At LAIMUN, we value thorough research and preparation. We ask that delegates write position papers following [these directions](#). The deadline to submit position papers to be considered for Committee and Research Awards is Friday, November 26 at 11:59 PM PT. The deadline to submit to be considered for Committee Awards is Thursday, December 2 at 11:59 PM PT.

We also encourage all delegates to read the [LAIMUN Rules of Procedure](#) for conference-specific information and as a reminder of points and motions that can be made during committee.

Feel free to reach out to our staff with any questions or concerns you may have. Delegates can find their chairs' contact information next to their committee profile and the Secretariat's email addresses on the staff page. Any member of the LAIMUN staff will be happy to assist you.

We look forward to seeing you in December!

Sincerely,

Ben Henschel and Caroline Kiely
Secretaries-General, LAIMUN XXVII
secretarygeneral@mchsmun.org



Letter from the Undersecretary-General

Hello Delegates!

My name is Mia Cho and I am beyond excited to welcome you all to LAIMUN XXVII!

This is my fourth year in Mira Costa's Model UN program and I can confidently say that it was one of the best decisions I made going into high school. I have debated at too many local conferences to count, so you may recognize me from another conference!

The LAIMUN staff has worked hard to offer an in-person conference that is safe for all delegates but still maintains the same caliber of debate we have provided in the last 26 years. I truly hope LAIMUN offers you the opportunity to improve yourself as a delegate. My experience in debates has helped me discover my passions, and I hope your time at LAIMUN can do the same for you!

LAIMUN follows a strict policy in regards to pre-written resolutions and plagiarism. In an effort to have a fair and balanced debate, all work must be original and no resolutions may be drafted before the start of committee.

Don't forget your masks and research binders! Trade in your pajamas for dress pants! Mira Costa Model UN wishes you the best of luck at LAIMUN and we look forward to another year of stimulating, substantive, and insightful debate.

If you have any further questions regarding LAIMUN, please feel free to reach out to ga@mchsmun.org, any of the other secretariat emails, or chair emails if the question is committee specific. Good luck with conference preparation and I look forward to seeing you all in December!

All the best,

Mia Cho
Undersecretary-General of General Assembly Committees
Introduction to the Dias



Introduction from the Dais

Hi delegates!

My name is Marisa Khurana, and I am so excited to be your head chair for 2nd ECOFIN Advanced! I am a senior in the Model UN program here at Mira Costa High School, and I have been in the program for my entire high school career. MUN has given me such awesome opportunities, and I have been able to attend over 10 conferences so far, some of which included UC Davis and the greater LA area. Outside of Model UN, I enjoy travelling both in and outside of the country. Some of the coolest places I have been to include India, Singapore, Canada, Mexico, France, and Italy. Through this, I have gotten to both visit family across the globe as well as see and learn about various cultures firsthand. I actually moved to LA from Atlanta right before my freshman year of high school, so I often go there as well to visit friends and family. Go Hawks (for all my basketball fans)! I also participate in something called National Charity League, something I have been a part of since 7th grade. I have been able to do around 500 hours of community service in total with some of my friends through this program, and I have gotten to help out lots of people in need as well. I look forward to seeing the advanced debate which is going to be taking place in committee this year, and I hope to see lots of diverse, new solutions being brought to the table! I know last year was very strange in the Model UN program for all of us—what with most, if not all, conferences being forced to be virtual—so I can't wait to be able to chair this year and see all of you debating in person. If you have any questions or concerns whatsoever, please do not hesitate to email us at ecofin.adv.laimun.xxvii@gmail.com, and one of us will get back to you as soon as we can. Good luck in preparing for this debate, delegates, and I cannot wait to meet all of you in person! See you soon!

Marisa Khurana

For Research Award and Committee Award consideration, email your position paper to your dais by Friday, November 26 at 11:59 PM PT

For Committee Award consideration, email your position paper to your dais by Thursday, December 2 at 11:59 PM PT



Committee Description

The Economic and Financial Committee of the General Assembly, deals with many issues pertaining to economic growth and development. Historically, ECOFIN has worked through obstacles in the way of successful international macroeconomic policy, the financing of globalization and interdependence, and sustainable development. This Second Committee also handles special circumstances such as the sovereignty of the Palestinians in East Jerusalem and Syrian Golan. The committee was first founded on the 25th of April, 1945 and its membership is open to any member states of the UN, and follows the same parliamentary procedures as the General Assembly. With 193 members currently, ECOFIN works to encourage international growth through financial assistance and improvements in financial affairs; each of its members are considered equally and are afforded identical voting rights.

Within the General Assembly, ECOFIN is unique because it serves to lead the development of a coordinated approach to economic issues centric to local, national, and global economies. This committee largely assists in the development of lower-GDP nations to provide economic stimulus and growth through financial aid and proper resource allocation. A notable ECOFIN project is the establishment of the Sustainable Energy for the All initiative. This program aims to increase investment in renewable energy sources with the ultimate goal of widespread access to sustainable and modernized energy by 2030.

In recent years, ECOFIN has aided in resolving major disputes in the Middle East such as insisting Palestine end its occupation in Syria. This was due to the human rights violations heavily affecting the economic environment because of the military, social, and political stress the occupation was putting on the people. ECOFIN has also illustrated a major stress on Least Developed Countries and Landlocked Developing Countries, through their collaboration with the IMF and the World Bank. Having an understanding of the involvement ECOFIN has in current affairs will be essential in understanding the topics being discussed.



Topic A: Food Security in Africa

I. Background

The United Nations Economic and Financial Committee has made clear that their main goals involve the economic development and prosperity of all nations on an international scale¹. Under these terms, it can be further stated that 2nd ECOFIN may wish to do this through any means possible, including the improvement of sustainable development of developing nations, development of agriculture, and, more specifically, food security. Overall, world hunger has been a problem plaguing the international community for years. In order to properly combat this, the problem must be centralized and dealt with individually based on each nation and its needs. We must begin primarily with the countries who are in most dire need of assistance. One nation which is known to have severely struggled in this regard for an extended period of time is Africa. In 2020 alone, over 100 million residents of Africa were battling with the struggles that come alongside food insecurity for both them and their families² at a level considered to be catastrophic, this according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification System. The introduction of COVID-19 has only worsened the situation regarding the food crisis in Africa; the country saw a 60% increase in food poverty in less than a year, this not even yet considering the statistics of 2021. COVID has caused many issues in Africa regarding food

¹ "Food." *United Nations*, United Nations, www.un.org/en/global-issues/food.

² the Africa Center for Strategic Studies

February 16, 2021. "Food Insecurity Crisis Mounting in Africa." *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, 9 Mar. 2021, africacenter.org/spotlight/food-insecurity-crisis-mounting-africa/.



security, many of which stem from actions such as border closures, nation-wide lockdowns, and limited job availability. Some of the top countries within Africa that battle these issues the most include the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad, Ethiopia, and Sudan.

It is clear that Africa is majorly struggling in regards to food security. Of 86 malnourished countries, 43 are found to be located within the regions of Africa³. However, when thinking about why the problem continues to occur, there are many different factors to consider.

According to the FAO, some of the main reasons behind food insecurity in Africa return to fundamental ideas of increasing population, limited agricultural production, and poverty as a whole. In 2021, Africa as a whole was found to have close to 1.5 billion people residing within it, and this population growth only continues year after year.⁴ Because of this, the demand for food has been higher than ever, yet the means in distribution and production in order to supply the food for the ever growing population is at an all time low. As a result, the problem only continues to grow in severity. Once again, the COVID-19 pandemic is only making everything more difficult in terms of malnutrition of the population, but the demand for food is not slowing any time soon; in fact, it only continues to grow exponentially. Africa has also been faced with many difficulties in regards to production and distribution of agricultural resources. Some of the reasons behind this include limited access to modern technology, making

³ "Introduction." *Knowledge and Information for Food Security in Africa*, www.fao.org/3/w9290e/w9290e01.htm.

⁴ Saleh, Mariam. "Africa: Population Growth Rate 2000-2020." *Statista*, 17 May 2021, www.statista.com/statistics/1224179/population-growth-in-africa/.



advancements in regards to trade for agricultural industrialization, the difficulties that come alongside climate change, and utilization of existing land reforms in order to provide assistance. In addition to this, poverty is—as it always has been— a major issue for the continent. The World Bank considers anyone who makes less than \$1.25 per day below the poverty line; this refers to at least 36% of the population in Africa.⁵ Some of the major reasons behind poverty include climate, conflict within the individual countries, disease, and improper means of agriculture for communities.

Another major issue in regards to the situation of food insecurity in Africa revolves around climate in the region. Climate change is a problem being faced across the world; however, it is especially felt very heavily in Africa because of the other existing problems the nation already is forced to face. Climate change limits Africa’s abilities to combat malnourishment within the countries and it is a very difficult factor to challenge. The overall temperature in Africa has increased by 1° Celsius in the past 100 years.⁶ Because of this, African countries are forced to battle heat waves and overly-hot conditions, all of which make things such as agricultural practices increasingly difficult. It is clear that climate change is directly linked to the negative effects of food insecurity within Africa, and this is one of the most major issues that stands in the way of the nation’s progress towards better food security.

⁵ “On the Poorest Continent, the Plight of Children Is Dramatic.” *SOS*, www.sos-usa.org/about-us/where-we-work/africa/poverty-in-africa.

⁶ *Unfccc.int*, unfccc.int/news/climate-change-is-an-increasing-threat-to-africa.



Something else which has been found to cause major issues directly related to food insecurity in Africa is the continuous conflicts, both active and past, which have presented a lasting effect on the various countries. Between the years 2009 and 2019, it was found that the intense, violent conflict which was occurring within sub-Saharan Africa caused direct challenges and difficulties to the malnourishment of Africa in its wake.⁷ This violent conflict created an issue regarding food insecurity pertaining specifically to drought-related conditions, thereby creating further issues for the region. This idea that conflict within a given area creates further issues regarding steps towards achieving food security is prevalent, especially within Africa, and must be countered.

II. UN Involvement

The United Nations has made several developments in regards to food security in Africa in order to help combat the ongoing crisis. Food security is, overall, a major international issue which the UN takes very seriously and aims to deal with on an international level as effectively and efficiently as possible. In fact, there is an entire committee within the UN committed to providing assistance with this matter. It is referred to as the World Food Programme, or the WFP. The WFP was created because of the 1960 Food and Agricultural Organization Conference; however, it was only meant to be a three year experiment, but because it was extremely

⁷ Anderson, Weston, et al. "Violent Conflict Exacerbated Drought-Related Food Insecurity between 2009 and 2019 in Sub-Saharan Africa." *Nature News*, Nature Publishing Group, 12 Aug. 2021, www.nature.com/articles/s43016-021-00327-4.



successful, the WFP was kept around in order to continue combating world hunger⁸. In addition to this, the UN utilizes the World Bank Group to provide assistance here. They aim to provide investments in regards to agricultural development in countries with dire need for assistance, the goal being to provide the best possible means to both keep up with the demand for food on a countrywide scale as well as properly provide means of distribution.⁹ Furthermore, the United Nations created and utilizes something called the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. This organization's aim is primarily to create the easiest possible access to food and means of nutrition for the given population who most needs it. Not only this, but it also aims to do so on a regular basis in order to ensure a long-term solution which will have the ability to feed groups of people who were previously struggling for as long as is possible. They do this through shifting the focus towards several different aspects regarding food security, some of which include the following: poverty reduction; proper economic processes; sustainable development; allocation of natural resources such as land, air, and water; and betterment of the climate as a whole. The FAO has also created what is called the FAO Food Price Index. The goal of this is to continue monitoring changes in food prices on an international scale, doing so on a monthly basis in order to ensure the most accurate results possible.¹⁰ Finally, one last organization which the United Nations has introduced in order to try and combat the ongoing

⁸ Project, Borgen. "The History of the World Food Programme." *The Borgen Project*, Borgen Project https://borgenproject.org/wp-content/uploads/The_Borgen_Project_Logo_small.jpg, 22 June 2021, borgenproject.org/the-history-of-the-world-food-programme/.

⁹ "Food." *United Nations*, United Nations, www.un.org/en/global-issues/food.

¹⁰ "FAO.org." *FAO Food Price Index | World Food Situation | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*, www.fao.org/worldfoodsituation/foodpricesindex/en/.



issue pertaining to food insecurity in Africa is the International Fund for Agricultural Development. Their main goal here is to combat malnourished populations through the eradication of poverty, one of the main persisting reasons that the issue has continued for such an extended period of time. They work primarily with developing countries and rural populations to provide assistance in bettering the food security overall on a global scale.

III. Topics to Consider

There are a wide variety of facets to the issue regarding Food Security in Africa. In order to properly combat this problem, the various aspects as well as their potential future problems and solutions must both be considered and acknowledged.

First of all, one main component behind the instability of food security in Africa is in regards to droughts. Africa has been seeing poor amounts of rainfall now more than ever, some countries facing having extremely limited rainfall which has caused significant droughts for over 60 years¹¹. In providing access to food, it first must be considered how access to sufficient water sources can also be supplied. This is especially when taking into consideration how many forms of food production require certain amounts of water, something which is difficult for those within Africa. Not only this, but water in general is especially difficult to obtain in Africa, let alone clean water. Many of the water which is somewhat accessible to Africans is completely unsanitary, thereby causing further issues such as disease. These repercussions are also

¹¹ "Food Crisis in East Africa." *Oxfam*, www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/emergencies/past-emergencies/food-crisis-in-east-africa/.



detrimental to the food insecurity currently occurring within the region, which is exactly why the issue of limited access to water and sanitation must be addressed.

Conflict, both internally and externally, is another major contributing factor to the issue of food insecurity in Africa. In fact, it could even be considered among the largest reasons why the crisis has been so difficult to absolve¹². For example, South Sudan is currently in Phase 5 of a proper famine crisis. South Sudan has been experiencing a severe crisis, becoming especially difficult to handle in 2013 as a power conflict began, resulting in the ongoing situation occurring within the country. Millions of citizens within the country are currently facing issues of displacement, all of whom find it extremely difficult to obtain proper food sources for themselves and potentially their families as well. Additionally, 90% of countries which have increased to dire amounts of famine in Africa have unresolved, intense conflicts which are currently happening. A few of these include Islamic group assaults in the Sahel, highway attacks in Nigeria, and continuation of displays of aggression in the Central African Republic. Ethiopia is another victim of conflict and resulting famine within their borders, having faced severe issues with conflict for around 30 years thus far. As the years go on where certain countries continue in their struggles, the problem only grows, continuing to be more and more difficult for solutions to be properly applied and effective in their implementation. When these conflicts occur, the citizens below the poverty line are especially victimized, being displaced and therefore having even more limited access to food prior to beforehand. Not only this, but these people are forced

¹² the Africa Center for Strategic Studies
February 16, 2021. "Food Insecurity Crisis Mounting in Africa." *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, 9 Mar. 2021,



to leave any of their potential valuable possessions behind, leaving these people with virtually nothing on hand. Because of how difficult it is to provide aid for them, there is virtually nothing being actively done to help these people; something which certainly needs to be addressed.

Furthermore, poverty and instability of nations within Africa are also major causes of famine and food insecurity. Poverty and the food crisis are two entirely correlated factors. Whenever people are unable to work and make enough money to support themselves and their families healthily, they begin to make themselves sick with the amount of labor which goes into this. As a result, these people are no longer able to provide for themselves or their correlating families, further developing the ongoing crisis. Not only this, but some of these people work in the food production sector, thereby resulting in a shortage of food on behalf of those who are unable to continue their work for a given period of time¹³. Additionally, because poverty has been such a prevalent issue in Africa for decades, this makes combatting the food crisis all the more difficult for those residing within its borders. They also do not have the proper governmental infrastructure to even begin to properly aid or provide assistance in any way whatsoever¹⁴. Furthermore, many of these countries have insufficient governments, thereby resulting in an improper distribution of available resources. Not only this, but because the countries are unable to distribute the funding and resources they do have accordingly, more developed countries are less willing to provide significant amounts of assistance; they fear that it

¹³ *Global Education*, gloaleducation.edu.au/hot-topics/poverty-and-food-security.html.

¹⁴ Reid, Kathryn. "Africa Hunger, Famine: Facts, FAQs, and How to Help." *World Vision*, 19 July 2021, www.worldvision.org/hunger-news-stories/africa-hunger-famine-facts.



will be wasted, making no movement in combating the food crises. Considering how most countries in Africa are considered to be under-developed or developing, this is another indicator that the countries are unable to combat the crisis in regards to famine themselves.

Environmental, Climate, and Natural Hazards are all major contributors to the issue of food instability in Africa. Drought is included in this; however, there are a significant number of other existing subtopics which can be related here. In contrast, flooding is another major issue in terms of weather conditions which pertain to a negative impact on these countries' abilities to combat famine. These floods end up being horrible for the food production, destroying means of doing so such as crops and fields which are not properly equipped to deal with this. Additionally, these floods have a long-term impact as well in terms of the repercussions they leave behind, including locust swarms, feeding on and destroying agriculture and being extremely difficult to contain. When these countries in Africa are subject to negative climate conditions, it results in an increase in how much more vulnerable these places ultimately become to food insecurity.

Climate change, as was earlier discussed, is another major issue; it drastically affects typical weather patterns and conditions and makes it increasingly difficult for African citizens to both adapt and continue to try to properly resolve the food crisis as a result.

IV. Case Study

South Sudan is known to have one of the worst current ongoing conflicts within the region of Africa, and this violence and instability has negatively impacted the pre-existing issue of food insecurity more so now than ever before. Globally, South Sudan has the third worst



refugee crisis¹⁵, this in addition to other problems. Although it recently gained its sought-after independence, only eight years later are they facing one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. The most prevalent issue that the country is facing is in regards to the food insecurity crisis. Famine continues to be a serious problem which South Sudan continues to struggle in providing aid for.

The crisis in South Sudan first began soon after they won their independence in January of 2011. This was as a result of the consequences behind the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. However, soon after this victory, the leading political party in the now independent country became divided. This ended up ultimately leading to significant in-fighting as the power struggle continues. The problem regarding this political crisis first became especially relevant in December 2013, especially considering when the president called out the vice-president for forming and participating in a certain coup. After this, the fighting took to the streets in the capital of Juba. Although there have been some peace talks in order to create reparations since the conflict has first occurred, all of the issues which have been imposed on the struggling country as a result of the conflict. Displacement of refugees continues to be a problem, and this impacts food insecurity directly as these people are unable to provide for themselves in terms of getting the protein and overall nourishment which they are in desperate need of. Not only this, but another problem which emerges from the extensive number of displaced individuals and refugees present currently within South Sudan is that, since these people do not have a proper

¹⁵ “Quick Facts: What You Need to Know about the South Sudan Crisis.” *Mercy Corps*, 26 July 2021, www.mercycorps.org/blog/south-sudan-crisis.



home base with things such as their assets and such to return to, they have no steady means of daily work. This work allows them to get the funding they need to provide food for themselves and their families. Additionally, a significant number of workers is necessary in order to try and meet the numerous demands for nutritional needs throughout the regions within the country, thereby resulting in an even further increased shortage of food. Because of this, the problem continues to grow, and it gets especially more difficult to combat. It must also be noted that, since there are so many other issues happening simultaneously at the moment, the resources which are necessary to be allocated directly towards the food crisis alone can not be. This is because these resources are now being spread across a multitude of other aspects of the issue which the country is combatting, thereby resulting in a further incline into the ongoing crisis. Even worse, the government and its means of providing aid and relief are both limited and ineffective, thereby causing most of the country to have to go without the assistance which they so desperately need. Furthermore, more than half of the country lives well below the poverty line, making and being forced to live off of less than \$1 per day¹⁶.

Because of the numerous issues occurring in the country and the intensity of them, tension amongst the population is extremely high. Disagreements between citizens on matters such as property rights, access to resources, and land use and ownership are causing severe arguments, many of which are turning violent very quickly. Sometimes, these citizens go as far

¹⁶ “Read ‘Harnessing Operational Systems Engineering to Support Peacebuilding: Report of a Workshop by the National Academy of Engineering and United States Institute of Peace Roundtable on Technology, Science, and Peacebuilding’ at NAP.edu.” *National Academies Press: OpenBook*, www.nap.edu/read/18598/chapter/6.



as to steal the property and lives under those who they disagree with, abducting entities ranging from cattle and other necessary means for farming to even women and children in order to both make a point and to gain the resources of their neighbors which they also desire. These raids which are growing in frequency is only worsening the situation of inadequate farming quotas to be met. This is regardless of the fact that up to 70% of the land within the country is deemed as arable and can be used for farming; only 4% of it is actually in active use.

The United Nations defines food security as food availability, food access, and food utilization. It is clear that South Sudan struggles with all three of these aspects, and this is as a result of the conflict which has plagued their freshly independent country for a decade—which is how long that they have been in existence as a recognized independent state. Because of this, it is clear that a certain caliber of solutions must be presented in order to provide assistance, especially taking into account how there are various other issues which contribute to the ongoing issue of food insecurity in South Sudan. Some of these include violent conflict; farm raids amongst citizens; the refugee crisis both internally and externally; unequal distribution of resources, a weak and unequipped government; and an increasing number of citizens who live far below the poverty line. Around 7 of the 10 million people who reside in South Sudan are involved heavily in the humanitarian crisis and, as a result, are in dire need for assistance. This accounts for over 70% of their population, including the refugees from the country who have been forced to flee to other neighboring countries in order to try and escape the ongoing conflict.



V. Guiding Questions

1. Of the various contributing factors to the increasing food crisis in Africa, which will be the most productive to combat, and what will be the means of going about doing this?
2. Why has the food security crisis continued in Africa for such an extensive period of time, and why has this continued to happen?
3. How are certain prevalent programs and organizations responding to the food crisis in Africa? What can be done to better improve the effectiveness of their responses?
4. In what ways are women and children specifically impacted by famine, and why is this relevant?
5. What are some of the long-term solutions which can be implemented in order to ensure continuous aid for Africa will not be necessary for this crisis?



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the Africa Center for Strategic Studies

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Marisa Khurana and Katie Mackechnie

General Assembly, ECOFIN

9 September 2021



Topic B: Control of Natural Resources in Occupied Syrian Golan Heights

I. Background

Stuck between two feuding nations, the Golan Heights is an 1,800 square kilometer large region, with one side touching Israel and the other Syria. Tossed like a coin, the Golan, which has been geopolitically Syrian since 1946, became an object of desire for Israel during the Six-Day War of 1967. Prior to this Six-Day War, there was a territorial border of June 4, 1967 which proved to be ineffective with no withdrawal from either side. From then on, two-thirds of this region has been under unofficial Israeli administration, ever since the nation decided to occupy it during wartime. Later that year, during the fourth Arab League Summit, the Khartoum Resolution emerged as its renowned byproduct; the resolution established “The Three No’s Resolution” which determined that there must be “no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, and no negotiations with Israel”.¹⁷

The occupying forces continued, however, to maintain their forced dominance by establishing Israeli settlements in the Golan, as well as using their own unicameral legislature, the *Knesset*, to erect the Golan Heights Law upon the Syrian region in 1981. As time progressed, Israeli presence in the Golan became much harder to retract and the situation remained the same, until 2011, during the Syrian Civil War. As democracy-backed disruptions of dissent began to

¹⁷ <https://ecf.org.il/issues/issue/141>



spark in southern Syria, uprisings followed in chains that were violently silenced by the Syrian government. As tensions began to stifle the state, extremist jihadist organizations entered the scene, such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS) group.¹⁸ As a result, the unoccupied, eastern third of the Golan Heights, was divided even further amongst the administration's governance and the Syrian rebel groups. For the next 6-7 years, the lone, Golan third hosted multitudinous amounts of disputes and constant battles. These conflicts involved several fighting groups, including the Syrian rebel factions (as well as involved American forces along with them), al-Nusra Front, Khalid ibn al-Walid Amry, and other jihadist groups, and the Syrian Army.

Following this war-period, the Syrian government finally repossessed full control over that portion of the Golan. A year later, the United States set a precedent for the entire international community, underneath the Trump Administration; POTUS Donald Trump officially recognized the Golan Heights as a belonging region to the State of Israel, becoming the first nation, ever, to designate the region under Israeli jurisdiction. As a direct response to Trump's actions, all 28 member states of the European Union held the opposite proclamation to the United States and recognized Syrian sovereignty instead. Israeli law experts even went to unnecessary lengths to push the standing policy that "land gained by either defensive or offensive wars cannot be legally annexed under international law".¹⁹

¹⁸ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-35806229>

¹⁹

<https://www.haaretz.com/.premium-jurists-debunk-netanyahu-s-golan-claim-annexation-can-t-be-excused-by-defensive-war-1.7067393>



Now, still occupied by Israeli forces, the Golan Heights are faced with numerous implications. The region, abundant in natural resources, was just the jackpot for Syria's border nation. While choosing to ignore Syria's private/public ownership of the Golan, Israel has exploited over 95% of its natural resources. As matters increasingly get worse, the international community must decide what should be done to handle the situation. The main resources being expropriated would include the Golan's oil, gas, and water power. Beginning as early as the 1990s, the INOC, the Israeli National Oil Company, employed their shaft sinking permits within the domain of the golden heights. It is estimated to have extracted a total amount of 2 million barrels of oil, liquefying to a whopping \$24 million. These drilling permits were briefly suspended during the Rabin administration, however, after those three years, the INOC continued with the exploration and repeated the exploitation process. In 1997, ex-Director of the Government Companies Authority (GCA), Tzipi Livni, led the movement of privatizing the INOC, inherently stopping the exploratory drilling for 15 years. Taking advantage of the Syrian conflicts during their Civil War in 2011, Israel re-implemented their drills for exploratory wells, which would later extract more gas/oil from and ship it to the new, enacting Afek Oil and Gas, another Israeli gas company, in 2013. In 2017, after digging 10 whole wells, Afek decided to momentarily halt their operations, searching for further licenses to continue their work in the future. One of most damaging aspects of the illegal oil and gas drilling would be unethical sourcing that the process requires; companies like Afek find no issue with fracking, a process that injects foreign, toxic chemicals into the ground, in the Golan, in order to withdraw their



desired resources, influencing both water contamination and small-scale earthquakes around the drilling sites.

Yet another resource being exploited by Israeli settlements/forces would be the Golan's water. Israeli forces were eager to occupy the Golan Heights, with another intent to take advantage of its abundance of rainfall.²⁰ The former prime minister of Israel, Rabin, even publicly declared that the state was afraid of losing its water-resource connections to the Golan. Israel has not only exploited the Syrian resources, but it has enacted several "discriminatory water policies" towards the populations of Syria; there has been an extreme influx in water selling prices and the quotas for purchasing water have been lowered a dehumanizing amount. Israeli Golan inhabitants have no issue consuming and possessing unlimited amounts of water, while the Syrian inhabitants simultaneously receive very little water. Additionally, due to the inaccessibility to water resources, Syrian agricultural lives are much harder to lead, while Israeli forces abuse the resources to produce their high-quality liquors and native fruits in the Golan Heights. As Israel continues to expropriate Syrian environments, the inhabitants of the Golan grow at higher risks of serious jeopardy, both politically and physically.

II. UN Involvement

With this crisis being a present issue since the sixties, the dispute over the Golan has had quite a few United Nations actions launched in relation to it. After Israel's unlawful positioning of the Golan Heights Law on it, the state was officially condemned by Resolution

²⁰ <https://www.wri.org/insights/ranking-worlds-most-water-stressed-countries-2040>



497, a UN Security Council (UNSC) order that informed that “the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction, and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights is null and void and without international legal effect”. In addition, the Security Council additionally passed Resolution 242, an edict that affirmed that Israel’s Golan acquisition was “inadmissible”, due to its wartime-period conditions.²¹

In other attempts, the United Nations founded the creation of the UNODF, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, written within the context of 1974 UNSC Resolution 350, and formed in response to the Israeli-Syrian dispute.²² The UNODF’s first order of business was to establish and maintain an area of ceasefire between Israel and Syria, as well as oversee the planned “disengagement agreement”. As expected, the ceasefire’s clauses experienced numerous violations, thereby triggering the UN’s deployment of increased military action in the Golan. As recently as December 2020, Resolution 2555 was assumed into agreement and the initial “June 30 2021” ceasefire-mandate termination was extended, due to the consistent presence of violence in the Golan and neither side’s refusal to give up the region. Over 1.2 thousand UN personnel, as of July 2021, are stationed in the Golan Heights, supervising the official disengagement.

Since the UNODF’s creation and jurisdiction within the Golan, several summits have been held amongst UN member states to discuss the status of the ceasefire and the UNODF’s progress within the war-plagued region. Jean Pierre Lacroix, the UN Peacekeeping Operations

²¹ <https://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/0/7d35e1f729df491c85256ee700686136>

²² <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/undof>



chief, stated the UN's recognition of the ceasefire violations and made another official statement toward the nations, which entailed of two messages: the peace action was still active and ultimately functioning, and all involved parties must respect the Disengagement of Forces Agreement in compliance to international law. Lacroix went on to call out to all Members of the Security Council the opposing forces to the implications of the resulting "escalation" of military forces, post-violation, and to maintain the ceasefire.

In light of the United States' decision to stick by Israel's side, Rosemary DiCarlo, the UN head of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, overemphasized the Secretary-General, Guterres', point that the Golan's status had indeed remained the exact same, and no significant changes were positively made toward the situation. DiCarlo proceeded to reiterate the UN's desire that no other country should "undermine the relative stability of the situation on Golan and beyond".²³ DiCarlo expressed the UNODF's acknowledgement of the 2012 Syrian ceasefire violations, although they were made in efforts toward another ongoing dispute, the Syrian Civil war.

Currently, the Disengagement Observer Force is monitoring its 266 km² "buffer zone" between Israeli-Syrian forces, keeping a close watch on both parties, and reporting to the UNSC with any news of future violations. The ceasefire is located across the Purple Line, the border line between the western, Israeli-occupied two-thirds of the Golan, and the eastern third, belonging to Syrian forces, and will be supervised for the next 2 years, until the next deadline hits.

III. Topics to Consider

²³ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/03/1035631>



As the situation grows more dire with time, it is important to consider the severity of Israel's legal injustices, especially regarding their control over the natural resources of the geopolitically-Syrian Golan Heights. Unlike any other region, the Golan supplies Israel with water, wind, and oil/gas power. One must acknowledge that the State of Israel isn't solely exploiting these resources, but it is also preventing the rightful, Syrian owners from justly accessing their means of sustenance.

Regarding the less-discussed resource, wind, Israel has expropriated natural power to an even greater extent than the other two resources, oil and water. With the initially positive ambition of sustaining clean energy, Israel continues to illegally host their energy projects within the Golan Heights, due to the vast environmental benefits. This situation has both denied Syrian energy companies their own resources, and created captive economies, forcing Syrians to rely on Israeli power for energy. A significant Israeli project, the Clean Wind Energy Project (ICWE) has infringed on Syrian health the most, and will continue to do so if Israel rests in the Golan.²⁴ In 2019, the national infrastructure committee (NIC), an Israeli body, passed the approbation of this clean wind energy project on Syrian agricultural lands in the Golan.

The Israeli Cabinet plans to expand ICWE to be their largest wind energy plants and 32 of the world's largest onshore turbine wind farms. A multitude of Syrian objections have been instituted by the nation and the Arab Human Rights Center in Golan Heights, however, Israeli

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<https://www.fidh.org/en/region/north-africa-middle-east/syria/occupied-syrian-golan-wind-turbine-project-poses-existential-threat>



energy committees have rejected them all, hoping to proceed with their lavish, illegal plan. This ICWE project, as well as its collaboration partner, Energix, are forecasted to employ mass amounts of terror surrounding Syrian health. These projected plans promise dangerous Syrian exposure to both flickering and infrasound. The agricultural lands and civilians, as well as the farming population, on which these already established wind farms are, will be completely jeopardized by these plans. Additionally, Syrian presence in the Golan is only so expansive, and these wind exploitation projects will strict the growth of three out of the five, only Syrian villages. These projects will also jeopardize the Golan's wildlife and livestock and will wholly demolish its surrounding environment.

It must also be taken into consideration that the Syrian Golan Heights are merely an addition to Israel's arsenal of illegally seized land territories. The Golan has been used as just another facet to export natural resources into Israeli hands, just like Israel's occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.²⁵ Israel, undergoing an influx of bigotry within its government by the day, have heavy support from American and British figures, including former American VP Dick Cheney, Jacob Rothschild, Michael Steinhardt, and more, all owning a selected position on the "Strategic Advisory Board" of an extremely powerful Israeli extraction company, Genie Oil and Gas.²⁶ Companies like Genie, Afek, the Clean Wind Energy Project, and more, must cease their operations, as their mere, illegal existencance poses an immense threat to the survival of Syrian jurisdiction and Syrian-Golan community life.

²⁵ <https://electronicintifada.net/content/israel-exploits-syrian-chaos-plan-looting-golan-oil/14701>

²⁶ <https://genie.com>



As well as natural resource exploitation, Israeli forces are also infringing on the Syrian territory with discriminatory laws surrounding religion and gender bias. Israeli political policies revolve around factioning religious minorities to their own Israeli laws, treating the Golan Heights like their own state territory, the Israeli government enacted laws for the Druze minority, causing a large religious Levant group, creating their zealous division into a legitimate, national identity. In 1967, after seizing the Golan Heights, Israel first attempted to implement this Druze Law onto the region, as well. As predicted, the region took the law with lots of opposition and the plan was an official failure, proving that the region was all the more Syrian than it was Israeli. The law was ultimately a politically advantageous decision, and it served no purpose in actually aiding the residents of the Golan. In fact, the proposed law forced the Druze minority to be the only non-Jew community to be conscripted, creating further religious and societal division among all the already-diverse populations in the Golan. Teenage Druze males were forced into military culture, undergoing heavy “violence-based” brainwashing in grade school, while their professors wore military uniforms. Druze males, despite their situation, however, had the upper hand over Druze females, who were not allowed to participate in the only “cultural currency” that integrated Hebrew-speaking Jews together, that being conscription.²⁷

Acknowledging the fact that Golanis were separated from their initial Syrian origins, these population opportunities provided little to no privileges and many negative results emerged from this. When comparing generational differences, it can be analyzed that literary rates were

²⁷ <https://merip.org/1996/09/israels-interventions-among-the-druze/>



much lower in the Golan, compared to those of Israel, although gender discrimination in Golan education is very seldom experienced. Israel has completely molded the Golan Heights into its child-region, preventing any Syrian jurisdiction, and being simultaneously disadvantageous to the few Syrian populations that still reside in the region.

It is evident that Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights has imposed a strong negative influence on the growth of the region, inhibiting and diminishing the development of the Syrian Golan socially, economically, environmentally, and politically.

IV. Case Study

Being a phenomenon within itself, the renowned Golani drilling crisis enrages a plethora of member states across the globe, standing alone as its own separate crisis, apart from the several other violations within the Golan Heights. Many Syrians are uninformed about the criminal activities of Israel, as their communication is sheltered on a large-scale by the Israeli government. Without much public declaration on their own, Israel has "secretly" green-lighted their exploratory drill frenzies for their Golani gold: oil and gas.

Initiating with Uzi Landau, the Minister of the Israeli Nation Infrastructure Committee, and his approbation of these terrorizing, exploitation plans, the Golan Heights received its first glimpse of environmental abuse; Landau understood the risk of potential Syrian indignation and, nonetheless, signed off on the petroleum hunting license to activate the exploratory drilling.²⁸

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<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/as-israel-and-jordan-face-an-environmental-squeeze-they-must-rebuild-trust/>



Landau's policies were extremely harmful, as he believed that the State of Israel had to employ every option they had to retain oil and natural gas resources, in order to become independent from the Arab oil market, no matter the circumstances. Hidden behind the scenes, the Netanyahu administration was forced to halt its drilling, aware that this Israeli action would enrage its conflicts between Jordan and Lebanon, as well.

Zoning in on the Israeli-Lebanese oil conflict, similar environmental discrepancies between Syria and Israel are present all throughout Lebanon and Israel's transnational tug-of-war for maritime energy resources. Beginning in October of last year, these states planned around a future binational conference to discuss each nation's jurisdiction over their maritime border that overlaps in the Mediterranean Sea. The testy matter was created with the establishment of a ceasefire along the "Blue Line", dating back to 2000, the timestamp of Israel's reluctant withdrawal of their occupying forces in southern Lebanon. Ever since the two feuding nations increased their tensions in March of 2021 with a disregard for their previous peace talks and an affirmed competition for the oil/gas resources in the eastern Mediterranean sea, neither state has been willing to compromise their jurisdiction over the abundance of potential energy.²⁹ Lebanon has made official claims, labeling the offshore natural resources as their own, while Israel still continues to exploit the sea's natural resources. Earlier in the dispute, from 2010-11, the Lebanese administration presented geographical representations of their coordinates, proving that

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<https://www.controlrisks.com/our-thinking/insights/israel-lebanon-compete-for-maritime-energy-resources>



their jurisdiction lied 81 miles into the sea. In direct response to Lebanon’s action, Israel made their own proposal which designated their land 10 miles into the proposed Lebanese land.

The underground “gold mine” has presented itself as the location of several violent conflicts, as well as environmental exploitation of what is predicted to be 1.7 billion barrels of oil and 122 trillion cubic feet of gas. These resources would allow the European Union and all of its 28 member states to consume this gaseous energy for 76 years. Compared to natural gas hunting in the Persian Gulf and off the shores of Brazil, the Mediterranean craze appears more modest, however, constant exploitation of the land doesn’t cease, and countries like Egypt, Turkey, and even the United States are illegally obtaining and controlling the outflow of oil and gas resources.

Many people are fearing for the dangerous environmental future for the Mediterranean Sea, with several oil spill warnings from the UN, reminding the international community of the Israeli-Jordanian crisis, when 200 tons of crude oil leaked into Jordan’s Red Sea port, Aqaba.³⁰ The damages done were just as irreversible then as they are now, and the international community hopes that this natural gas/oil expropriation competition won’t conclude in a similar fate.

V. Guided Questions

1. What methods must be approached, so that Israeli companies halt their dangerous operations?

³⁰ <https://apnews.com/article/05a0f4d6c62a45a9b484797f5dc3d29e>



2. How do created solutions acknowledge both the environmental and Syrian populational casualties?
3. What are some long-term solutions that can later expand Syrian privileges to natural resources that are rightfully theirs?
4. Can current existing Syrian-allied projects be modified to be more effective within the Golan?
5. How can the Syrian eastern third of the Golan improve its never-ending state of unrest and dissent without only establishing ceasefires/buffer zones?



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