

## Addressing Limits on NGOs

Where there has been assistance from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), there has been resistance to NGOs as well. In the past, resistance against NGOs was mainly seen in authoritarian dictatorships that sought to maintain control over their citizens, and thus saw groups that empowered civil society as a hindrance to this goal. Examples can be found in North Korea, Burma, Syria, and more. However, there has been recent backlash against NGO presence in much more liberal nations; China, India, and Hungary are just a few countries where NGOs are facing increasing legal restrictions on their activities and funding. James Savage, of Amnesty International, has said, "This global wave of restrictions [on NGOs] has a rapidity and breadth to its spread we've not seen before, that arguably represents a seismic shift and closing down of human rights space not seen in a generation" (Sherwood, 2015). These restrictions are severely harmful not only to NGOs, but to citizens of these countries. The typical result of this wave of restrictions is a great decrease in the services offered, or NGOs leaving the area altogether, and taking desperately needed services with them.

The main question that often accompanies results of NGO work is, "why wasn't this program more effective?" Donations are hard to come under normal circumstances when further limitations are imposed on NGOs, this make the donations even less effective in achieving their primary goal: reaching those who need the aid the most. Furthermore, addressing these limitations on NGOs gives us, as a committee, a lens to evaluate changing governments. It gives us a way to place different governments on a spectrum of freedom, which is useful in understanding the uniqueness of each government. There is much less of a wave of democracy than there used to be, and its impact on NGOs is just one of the major things this affects. My hope for the committee is that delegates get a deeper understanding of countries, hybrid regimes, and differences in democracy. For the most effective research and debate, it is important to consider what different nations are concerned about, and what NGOs can accommodate without compromising their missions.

## Open Agenda

**The NGO Forum will function similarly to PRESS in previous years, with delegates interacting with other committees as representatives of their respective NGOs.** Open agenda will be used for all delegates to engage in debate conference-wide. Delegations in this committee will be representing non-governmental organizations, and will immerse themselves in other committees where their organization's mission will be best fulfilled. The goal of an NGO in a UN committee will not only be to achieve the organization's mission, but to also enhance the UN resolution that is being debated and to ensure that state delegations have a clear understanding of what your particular NGO can do. This will be done by giving short presentations in UN committees, signing off



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## NGO FORUM

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on resolutions, presenting panels in committees, and writing press releases on behalf of your NGO on work being done in various UN committees. There is a large amount of flexibility of what your NGO may wish to do to engage with a UN committee, as well as the UN committees it may wish to engage with.

I have chosen this format of the committee because NGO-UN relations are consistently one of the most difficult concepts to address in all Model United Nations simulations. The power of NGOs is often misunderstood, and they often end up being the core of resolutions in many Model UN resolutions. There are also many existing problems with NGO-UN relations, ineffectiveness on the part of NGOs, and different limitations that impact how well NGOs accomplish their missions.

