
SECURITY COUNCIL

The “Northern Triangle” of Central America

Nestled into the isthmus of Central America, the “Northern Triangle” of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras has faced a long history of violence and unease. On a landscape already abundant with intensely bio diverse jungles, sinkholes, and highly volatile active volcanoes, the political and social strife of this region continues to solidify itself as the most pressing concern of its inhabitants. Following a series of civil wars in the region that began in the late 1960’s and lasted until the mid-1990’s, the region has remained highly unstable. Today, El Salvador and Honduras have the highest murder rates per capita in the world for any country not at war, while Guatemala follows not too far behind. Though there are many contributing factors to these statistics, the most influential by far is the intense gang violence occurring in the region, namely between the two immense international gangs Mara Salvatrucha (AKA MS-13) and the 18th Street Gang (AKA Barrio 18). Ever since their arrival in the Northern Triangle, both gangs have caused crime and violence to skyrocket as they take advantage of the region’s political and social instability to further their own international influence. Because of this gang activity, the Northern Triangle faces chaos and mass emigration as Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Hondurans seek to save themselves and their families.

I chose this topic because it is not a type of issue that is typically discussed in a Model United Nations Security Council committee. While this committee will often delve into the topics frequently featured in the news, such as the Islamic State or a potentially nuclear DPRK, latent issues such as the gang violence rapidly taking over the Northern Triangle so often go unmentioned. While this region is allegedly at peace, it remains one of the most violent places in the world. Nonetheless, the Northern Triangle seems to always take a backseat in international debate. That is where you all come in. As you research this topic, and develop solutions to promote peace and security in the Northern Triangle, I want you to consider why exactly this regional crime problem holds international repercussions. Approach this topic from many different angles, considering how these gangs are growing and why they are thriving. Examine how your own nation has dealt with violence and organized crime, and consider what aspects of these solutions might be applicable to the Northern Triangle. This topic draws not only upon your nation’s concern for domestic and international security, but also on their ethics surrounding drug trafficking and the violence that so often occurs in impoverished communities.

Open Agenda

Our second topic for this Security Council committee will be Open Agenda. What this means is that instead of having a previously defined topic going into our conference, we will vote on what international issue we would like to debate based on topic nominations brought forth by any willing delegates at the beginning of our Open Agenda session. In this synopsis, I will include brief overviews of five suggested topics for this committee: The Syrian Civil War, Nuclear DPRK, the South China Sea,



SECURITY COUNCIL

the DR Congo, and the Yemeni Civil War. What we end up actually debating in committee, however, is entirely up to you. We could debate Israel-Palestine or the Conflict in Kashmir. We could even debate the ethics of United Nations Peacekeepers, as long as our topic is ultimately relevant to matters of international peace and security.

The ability to have an Open Agenda debate is something that is unique to the Security Council, and one of the reasons why I believe this committee is one of the most fun and engaging experiences one can have in Model United Nations. The prospect of having to research at least five topics may seem daunting at first, but I want to let you know that I sincerely do not expect all of you to be experts in every single international conflict going on today. Instead, I want you to use this opportunity to shift the way that you approach MUN and debate. Yes, it is important that you know the main players and issues for any potential topics that might be discussed, but it is more important that you are confident in your own country's policies and history. You should be prepared to enter this committee knowing how your country would likely react to any given situation; as a result, you should be able to actively participate in debate even if the chosen topic is one that you are unfamiliar with.

To prepare for this committee, you should read all five of the small synopses that I've included here and expand on each of them in a similar manner to how you would prepare for any other topic in MUN (e.g. the Northern Triangle). You should also keep up with the news in the months leading up to conference, paying attention to any international issues and conflicts that could likely be discussed by the Security Council. I will expect you to have feasible and innovative solutions as we debate this topic in committee. While preparing, however, try not to get too caught up in tailoring your solutions to a specific topic; it is best not to waste your time becoming perfectly prepared for a debate that will likely never happen. Instead, make solutions based on how your country has dealt with similar situations in the past or what policies they have held towards similar situations in other countries. Then, be ready to detail and adjust your solutions through cooperation with fellow delegates in order to make new, comprehensive plans to tackle whatever issue we decide to debate. This is an awesome new opportunity for you to experience thinking on your feet and using the knowledge that you have to make new and creative solutions in committee.

If you are ever confused or have any questions, please feel free to contact me at mpollack@bmun.org. Happy studying, and I cannot wait to see you all in committee!

