



MODEL UNITED NATIONS

# SOCOMUN XXXIII

## SECURITY COUNCIL

TOPIC: OPEN AGENDA



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## Security Council Open Agenda

Hello delegates! I am Alex Sulzbach, and I am beyond thrilled to serve as your head chair for SOCOMUN XXXIII. I am currently a junior, and this year marks my third year in Model United Nations. I have participated in many conferences and received the privilege of travelling to the annual Berkeley MUN conference, which happened earlier this spring. MUN has left me with lasting friends from countless schools and has strengthened my public speaking skills. I am on Santa Margarita's Track and Field and Cross-Country teams, and love to do art in my free time. On campus, you can see me spending time studying for my classes, seeing my friends, and occasionally finishing up my art projects after school! Other hobbies that I have include hiking, travelling, and going to the beach with my friends. I recommend all delegates to not only have a firm understanding of the topic's background, UN involvement, and their policy, but also to propose feasible and well-researched solutions that address the issue at hand and are effective. Please locate the resources offered at the SOCOMUN website for any further help needed. Lastly, I encourage all delegates to try their best at this conference and have fun! Good luck delegates!

Hello, my name is Harrison Beck, and I am your Vice-Chair for SOCOMUN. This will be my third year in MUN, and I am looking forward to having the opportunity to be a vice-chair in this committee. I enjoy working with and debating with others about how to best solve some of the problems we are faced with. When I am not in MUN, I enjoy surfing, fishing, and mountain biking with friends. The most important thing to remember in committee is to try your best, work with others, and have fun!

Hi delegates, my name is Jack Burke, and I am your rapporteur for this committee. I'm currently a sophomore at SM and this is my second year in Model UN. I had a lot of fun participating in MUN last year throughout my seven conferences, and I look forward to continuing MUN all throughout high school. I am excited to watch you compete and wish you all the best of luck!

Throughout the SOCOMUN conference, delegates will discuss presented topics according to their country's policy and develop well-thought-out solutions that will be presented in speeches and put into resolutions near the end of the committee. The conference will begin with speeches, during which delegates will present their country's stance and propose solutions on the issue presented. For Security Council, there is no specific set topic for the committee, hence "Open Agenda." However, delegates are strongly encouraged to be prepared to research and discuss **Violent Extremism in the Sahel Region**, the default set topic for debate. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to email us at [socomunsc@gmail.com](mailto:socomunsc@gmail.com)! At SOCOMUN XXXIII, our main goal is to provide delegates with a fun, safe, and educational experience that will cultivate useful qualities and shape critical thinkers for the future.





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## Background

The rise of violent extremism in the Sahel region of northern Africa can be attributed to multiple causes. These range from the growing influence of Jihadist and other Islamic groups to a deteriorating environment in the Sahel region. Nations that have experienced increases in extremism include Mali, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, Nigeria and Burkina Faso. One of the most significant regions of extremism is located between the borders of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger in an area called Liptako-Gourma. Additionally, another important hub for extremism is the Lake Chad Basin area. This is where many Islamic groups have continued to fight and quarrel for influence.

After many African countries in the Sahel achieved their independence, most notably Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger, several ethnic conflicts arose. This was due to newly independent nations failing to properly include marginalized areas. Corrupt leaders in these nations refused to promote economic growth and purely focused on centralizing all resources to their capital cities. Most of those capitals in Sahel countries are located in the geographical south. This put a major divide between urbanized southern areas and the immensely poor and rural northern areas of nations. This began the brewing points for tensions and conflict.

In the Sahel Region, there have been over 18 successful coups since 1960 (IRC). After the Libyan State collapsed in 2011, violence began to be commonplace, especially with the proliferation of arms and fighters in the region. In Mali, the Tuareg people staged a rebellion against the government in the north of the nation. This was followed by a coup in 2012 and the eventual destruction of established institutions. Additionally, the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) took over Timbuktu, Kidal, and Gao. In 2016, the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) began attacks on ports in Burkina Faso. This established the Liptako-Gourma region as wildly unstable. This was also accompanied with this instability spreading to West African coastal nations.

In the Lake Chad Basin, where Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria are located, violence still remains rampant in a similar light. After the establishment of Boko Haram, a jihadi-group, instability ensued within Nigeria with child abductions and suicide attacks. Since Boko Haram became the Islamic State in the West African Province (ISWAP), the group has gained broad influence over the region and continues to expand this influence in nations such as Niger.

In regard to other contributors to this issue, the climate is also a stressor. Due to the profound effects of climate change, temperatures continue to soar in the Sahel region and climate shocks are beginning to occur more frequently. By 2080, it is predicted that the temperature in the Sahel will rise 2 to 4.3 degrees Celsius (IRC). This only adds to the existing problems of food security and poverty. It also adds to more civil unrest in the region.

Though the international community initially acted with initiatives like MINUSMA and the creation of the G5 Sahel Force, counterterrorism acts have been proven ineffective as they only cause higher civilian casualties and human rights abuses. In 2023, the conditions in the Sahel have deteriorated so much that it has caused the withdrawal of French troops from MINUSMA and the end of the UNSC sanctions regime. However, not all nations have pulled back. The United States, for example, continues to provide aid in the Sahel. Despite these efforts, the growing extremism in the region has discouraged businesses and other entities from investing in marginalized regions which could help to improve the current situation.



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## Potential Solutions

When researching and creating solutions, it is important to consider the already established International Humanitarian Laws (IHL). It is essential that solutions do not exacerbate inter-communal tensions and existing ethnic violence within the region. Solutions delegates propose could also include supporting reconciliation between communities, dialogue, initiatives for peace, and a potential ceasefire.

Peacekeepers or deployed troops can help temporarily ease hostilities as a short-term solution. Other potential ideas include investigating violations and abuses of human rights and addressing civilian vulnerability. As discussed before, climate change is one of the biggest and most recent factors influencing the decreasing stability. Job insecurity is also a prevalent issue as it leads to many young men joining militia groups and extremist organizations. Delegates may also focus on solutions that look to fix external factors that fuel the conflict such as climate change and a lack of job opportunities. It may be important to expand on ideas that incentivize the international community to provide more funding for the region. This can include community-based protection networks to continuously monitor human rights and aid the existing human rights watch. Lastly, solutions may also be focused on providing proper governance and centralization of resources within Sahel countries.

For general solutions that delegates propose, **funding needed will NOT be an issue** since all funding issues are expected to be covered by the United Nations 5<sup>th</sup> budgetary committee. Additionally, it is important to propose short, mid, and long-term solutions, as conflicts between communities and groups exponentially grow. The solution suggestions provided above are simply ideas to aid delegates' thinking on the issue. Delegates are strongly encouraged to form their own unique solutions that address the ongoing violent extremism in the Sahel. It is important to not only discuss who will act or what will happen, but also how the solution will be implemented on the international stage and be proven effective with time.

## Questions to Consider

Finally, below are some questions to consider when researching and formulating solutions. These questions do not need to be formally answered in committee, as their purpose is to allow delegates to think deeply about the presented issue for their country policy and solutions.

1. What is your country's stance on the current events going on in the Sahel region? How does this impact your country's involvement in this issue?
2. How should the nations approach this issue? Should they be involved at all?
3. What does your country believe is the biggest cause of the issue? Why is this more significant than other factors that play into the issue?
4. Will future counterterrorism measures in the Sahel Region prove to be effective? If not, what other measures can be created to deal with this issue?
5. How can International Human Rights Laws be kept in mind regarding this issue?
6. How can IHL laws play into the formation of solutions?
7. Are the current international laws enough to ensure the long-term safety of citizens in the Sahel region?



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