



ATLANTA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL MODEL UNITED NATIONS

AIMSUN VI Background Guide

Committee: United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF)

**Topic: Discussing the Challenges of Humanitarian Aid
Distribution to Children in Areas of Armed Conflict**



AIMSUN CONFERENCE

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Letter from our Chairs

Hello Delegates, and welcome to AISMUN VI! We're Jordan and Soliana, both 12th grade students at Atlanta International School, and your chairs for the UNICEF Committee!

I'm Soliana Solomon and I am more than excited to be one of your chairs for the UNICEF Committee! I started my Model UN journey seven years ago during the COVID pandemic and since then, I have debated in various national and international conferences, both as a chair and as a delegate, and served as the Secretary-General of AISMUN V. Model UN has been one of my greatest hobbies and experiences and I truly believe that it develops a multitude of interpersonal skills as well as awareness of global issues while being a fun and interactive space for delegates to blossom into diplomats. I enjoy seeing students have the same passion for diplomacy, policy, and advocacy and I am excited for you all to bring that passion to life in our committee. I hope you all are as thrilled as I am to start preparing for this conference and I look forward to meeting you all!

Hello! My name is Jordan Goins, and I cannot wait to be your chair! When I first encountered the UNICEF committee my freshman year at NHSMUN in New York City, I immediately resonated with the topics that affect people my age around the world, and it is my hope you will all find the same enjoyment I found! In this committee, you will be tasked with discussing real-world topics that greatly impact the lives of many, both in the past and present. We hope that all delegates, regardless of experience, are willing to contribute and participate in fruitful debates throughout the conference. We are here to guide you through this process, ready to help you with any questions or concerns you may have during our conference. We anticipate meaningful discussions as well as the possibility of controversial topics to be brought up,

however, we ask that all delegates approach this committee with open minds. Additionally, we are here to direct you all in the right direction.

Reminder to the Delegates: While in this committee, we expect you all to engage in these diplomatic conversations with sensitivity and awareness. This committee discusses issues that are still very relevant in our world today, and it is important to approach them with empathy and critical thinking so that we treat the debates with the seriousness they deserve. We ask that you remain focused, respectful, and mindful of the weight these topics carry.

We are more than thrilled to see what you all have prepared for this conference and see you develop these skills over the course of AISMUN VI, and please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or concerns! Best of luck!

All the best,

Jordan Goins (jordan.goins@aischool.org)

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Introduction to UNICEF

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund was founded on December 11, 1946, shortly after World War II, as a response to tend to the aftermath that impacted women and children from the war. UNICEF was originally created to respond to emergency care required for children around the globe; however, in 1950, it expanded to address both long-term and short-term needs of children and was shortened to be the United Nations International Children's Fund. Currently operating in 192 countries and territories, UNICEF is dedicated to supporting the nutrition, supporting the adolescents, and protecting the overall well-being of children across the world (UNICEF, "UNICEF History").

UNICEF's mission statement is to advocate and protect the rights of every child to aid them in meeting their basic needs and gain the opportunity to reach their full potential (UNICEF, "UNICEF Mission Statement"). UNICEF is also the world's largest provider of vaccines, as well as runs the world's largest humanitarian warehouse (UNICEF, "What We Do").

UNICEF funding comes entirely from the support of voluntary efforts. According to UNICEF's 2024 Annual Report, in 2024, the largest donors were the United States of America, which donated \$1.12 billion (USD), Germany, which donated \$679 million (USD), and the European Commission, which donated \$550 million (USD). UNICEF is governed by a 36-member executive board, made up of members elected by the United Nations Economic and Social Council, that establishes policies, approves programs, and oversees administrative and financial plans.

Key Terms

Humanitarian Aid: Material or logistical assistance provided for humanitarian purposes, typically in response to crises.

Armed Conflict: A situation of sustained, organized fighting between armed groups, states, or non-state actors.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): People forced to flee their homes but who remain within their country's borders.

Refugees: Individuals forced to leave their country due to conflict, persecution, or violence.

Child Protection: Measures to safeguard children from violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect during conflict.

Humanitarian Corridors: Safe passage routes established to deliver aid and evacuate civilians during armed conflict.

Blockades/Sanctions: Restrictions that can prevent or hinder the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Neutrality: A principle requiring humanitarian actors to avoid taking sides in hostilities or political controversies.

Impartiality: Delivering aid solely based on need, without discrimination.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs): Independent groups that provide aid and services, often alongside UN agencies.

Child Soldiers: Children recruited or used by armed forces or groups in conflict.

Malnutrition: A major consequence of disrupted aid distribution, particularly affecting children in war zones.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL): The set of rules, such as the Geneva Conventions, governing conduct in war and protection of civilians.

Safe Zones: Designated areas intended to shelter civilians, especially children, from the effects of conflict.

Logistical Challenges: Obstacles related to transport, infrastructure, and coordination of aid delivery.

Introduction to Humanitarian Aid Distribution to Children in Areas of Armed Conflict

In areas facing extreme impacts of armed conflict, humanitarian aid is a vital source in protecting the livelihood of children. However, political tension can put a strain on the ability to provide children with the resources they require to survive and thrive in the future. Without humanitarian aid, children lack food, water, safety, and more, and are at risk of starvation and possibly death. Therefore, distributing humanitarian aid is a necessary yet very challenging task, requiring careful planning, negotiation, and execution from all parties involved.

Understanding of Different Parties

➤ **United States of America:**

- The USA is one of the largest humanitarian aid donors worldwide and the nation also funds organizations such as UNICEF, WFP, and other NGOs. The U.S. often focuses its aid on strategic regions like conflicts in the Middle East (Yemen, Syria, Gaza), and also Ukraine. Humanitarian corridors are strongly advocated for by the nation, but they have also been criticized for linking aid to political or security objectives.

➤ **European Union (EU) & Member States:**

- Collectively, the EU is a top donor for humanitarian and development aid, with a strong emphasis on child protection and well-being. Some member states like Germany, France, and the UK are particularly active in refugee and child aid initiatives. A key focus is to promote human rights and often conditions aid on government accountability.

➤ **Russia:**

- Russia plays a complex role because as it does provide some humanitarian aid, it has also been accused of blocking UN resolutions/hindering aid in Syria and Ukraine. The nation positions itself as a provider of bilateral aid to allies but often frames UN humanitarian efforts as politically biased.

➤ **China:**

- China has also become increasingly active in humanitarian aid through bilateral assistance and the Belt and Road Initiative. The nation emphasizes state sovereignty and is very cautious about UN or NGO intervention in conflict zones without government approval.

➤ **Middle Eastern States (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Turkey, UAE, Qatar):**

- These nations are major donors in regional crises, specifically in Yemen, Syria, and Gaza. Countries such as Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon are also major sites of refugee burden as they host millions of displaced people, and connecting with this committee's topic, they host millions of displaced children as well.

- **African Union & Regional Powers (e.g., Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt):**
 - These states are both involved as hosts of refugee populations and conflict-affected areas. While some governments have been accused of restricting humanitarian access in domestic areas, often most call for more equitable aid distribution methods and domestic-led solutions.

- **Other Key Donors (e.g., Japan, Canada, Australia, Gulf States):**
 - These governments also all provide consistent financial assistance to UNICEF and international humanitarian aid frameworks and they also are well known for because they typically emphasize transnational cooperation and child protection in humanitarian action.

Time Line of Key Events

1946 - The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) was established to provide emergency food and healthcare to children in countries devastated by World War II.

1949 - The Fourth Geneva Convention was adopted and set out to protect civilians, including children, during armed conflicts.

1977 - The Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions were also adopted which strengthened the protection of children and civilians humanitarian access during times of war.

1989 - Adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) guaranteed children's right to survival, development, and protection, especially in war zones.

1990's - The Conflicts in Rwanda and the Balkans highlight large-scale humanitarian crises where aid to children was obstructed which drew global attention to the issue.

1999 - The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1261 which was its first resolution specifically addressing children in armed conflict.

2005 - The UN Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) was launched to track violations against children in armed conflicts including the denial of humanitarian access.

2014 - The Syrian Civil War was intensifying with widespread reports of blocked humanitarian convoys preventing aid from reaching children.

2017 - South Sudan declared a famine in parts of the nation which was exacerbated by conflict and blocked humanitarian access with children disproportionately affected.

2020 - Humanitarian aid delivery in conflict zones was complicated due to the COVID-19 pandemic which increased children's vulnerability.

2021 - Present: Ongoing conflicts continue to exemplify challenges in providing humanitarian assistance to children, with deliberate targets of aid routes and civilian infrastructure. Some examples of these ongoing conflicts are in Yemen, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Ukraine, Sudan, Gaza, and Israel.

Guiding Questions/Sources to Use

Guiding Questions:

1. What are the main barriers to delivering humanitarian aid to children in areas of armed conflict?
2. How do principles of neutrality and impartiality affect the ability of UNICEF and other humanitarian actors to operate during conflict?
3. What role do governments, non-state actors, and international organizations play in enabling or obstructing humanitarian aid?
4. How have past conflicts demonstrated the challenges of reaching children with aid?
5. What specific needs do children in warzones have that differ from adults such as nutrition, education, trauma support, or protection from army recruitment?
6. How can UNICEF strengthen coordination with other UN bodies, NGO's, and local organizations to improve aid delivery?
7. What international laws, treaties, or UN resolutions govern the protection of children and access to humanitarian aid during armed conflicts?
8. What innovative or technological solutions could overcome these challenges?
9. How can UNICEF encourage accountability when parties to a conflict deliberately obstruct aid?
10. What long-term effects do disruptions in humanitarian aid have on children's development and well-being?

Suggested Sources:

- 1. UNICEF Website** - Provides reports and publications on children in conflicts and humanitarian action
- 2. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)** – Provides situation reports and data on humanitarian crises
- 3. Geneva Conventions & Additional Protocols** - These are key documents governing the protection of civilians and humanitarian access
- 4. UN Security Council Resolutions on Children and Armed Conflict** (starting with Resolution 1261).
- 5. Save the Children Website** - An NGO which also has reports on child protection and humanitarian crises.
- 6. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Website** – Has information on international humanitarian law and humanitarian access.
- 7. ReliefWeb Website**- Provides up to date information and data on humanitarian situations worldwide
- 8. Human Rights Watch & Amnesty International Website**- Reports on violations impacting humanitarian access to children

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