

Committee Guide

UNHRC 2023

Our World at a Turning Point

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BREAKING OLD PATTERNS

***Fighting against
Modern Slavery and
Human Trafficking
as a Violation
of Human Rights***



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1. Personal Introduction

Honourable Delegates,

We are looking forward to chairing the Human Rights Council with you as our wonderful delegates in this year's OLMUN conference. To prepare for the conference, this committee guide will provide a quick initial overview of the discussed topic as well as give you some ideas for further research. However, before we get to any of that, we would like to briefly introduce ourselves:

1.1. Alma Kühl

Hey everyone,



My name is Alma Kühl, I am 17 years old and attend the 12th grade of the "Gymnasium in der Wüste" in Osnabrück (Germany). Last year, OLMUN 2022 made me acquainted with this impressive world of UN simulations from a delegate's point of view and that's also where I met Tessa. It has been a truly great experience and I am happy and honoured to have the opportunity to chair the HRC with her this year! As about myself, it might be worth mentioning that I love sports, at least in terms of time commitment, football and judo occupy a large part of my week, and I am strongly interested in science as well as in everything related to social issues. When I'm not engaged in work, I do some artwork, reading, writing, or spending time with friends and family.

Looking forward to getting to know all of you, having expedient discussions, and enjoying the experience to the fullest!

1.2. Tessa Frobenius

Dear Delegates,

My name is Tessa Frobenius and I'm 18 years old. I live in the small town of Ganderkesee, close to Oldenburg, and will write my Abitur at its Gymnasium this summer. I first got into contact with OLMUN in 2019, when I participated as a delegate with a group of friends from my school. After last year's conference, this will now be my third



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OLMUN and my first time leading a committee as a Chair, together with Alma. When not doing homework or studying, I mostly play music, at school, in our local orchestra or at church. But I'm also interested in meeting up with friends, photographing, reading or playing social games with my family. I'm really looking forward the upcoming conference, as I know from the two last times that this week is so much fun, but also enriching personally. I hope that you will experience the same in summer, no matter if you are a first-timer or a well-trained delegate.

See you in June!

2. United Nations Human Rights Council

In this year's conference, we will have the opportunity to get together in the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC or HRC). The HRC is a body of the United Nations dedicated to the promotion and protection of human rights and freedoms around the world.

The Council is composed of 47 member states elected by the UN General Assembly based on equitable geographical distribution and meets three times a year at its office in Geneva, Switzerland. UNHRC was founded in 2006 and succeeded the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights, which was considered inefficient and too politicized.

The work of the Human Rights Council is based on the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity, and non-selectivity, constructive international dialogue and international cooperation. This means, in brief, that it applies the same high standard of protection of human rights to every state without differentiation on a political basis.

The main tasks of the Human Rights Council are to promote the establishment, acceptance, implementation, and protection of human rights in the world, as well as to protect victims of human rights violations. It can adopt resolutions or individual members can make statements pushing for necessary changes. The Council also serves as a platform for defenders of human rights to bring issues to the attention of NGOs, governments, media, and the public in general. Through the Universal Periodic Review, the situation related to human rights in each member state is inspected every four years, and, where necessary, recommendations are made. In this way, the HRC attempts to resolve human rights issues through dialogue and offering practical solutions. The mandate allowing the Human Rights Council to generate intense scrutiny makes it a crucial tool to achieve the objectives of the human rights defenders. The HRC also allows individual states to show the rest of the world that they are committed to protecting human rights or are making effort to improve the shortcomings. In addition, the Council can examine situations in particular states (called country mandate) or

specific problems (thematic mandate). This means that not only the general, global issues of human rights are concerned, but also the scrutiny is applied to individual cases or specific occurrences.

HRC is the place where countries discuss the most pressing human rights problems, try to work together to solve them, and bring new, unknown issues to the discussion. A wide range of issues are discussed and dealt with in the Council, some of them being respect for human rights in crisis areas, terrorism, discrimination, the rights of indigenous peoples, the right to food, migration, technical cooperation, torture, and issues concerning minorities.

3. Fighting against Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking as a Violation of Human Rights

3.1. Introduction

In this year's HRC at the OLMUN conference, you will represent your delegations in the debate on how we can fight against Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking as a Violation of Human Rights. 'If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong'. As can be understood from Abraham Lincoln's statement, slavery is fundamentally wrong - there is no question about that. Accordingly, the prohibition of slavery is absolute and must be guaranteed by effective laws in the all the countries around the world. But the issue does not end there. Violations of basic human rights in the form of modern slavery and human trafficking continue to occur also in recent times.

As you can see below, there are several approaches to this area of concern. Initially, it is a matter of combating the ongoing violations and figuring out how to detect them. However, in order to effectively combat them, it is crucial to address the root causes and consider how these can be eliminated to ensure that modern slavery and human trafficking do not emerge in the first place. Prior to this, it must be clear what exactly the terms refer to and how widespread and thus urgent the two related violations are.

3.2. Modern Slavery

We all know about slavery and its darkest ages. Yet it would be a delusion to consider it as something of the past. As time moves on and our world develops so does slavery. We can no longer only be concerned with its 'classical' form. The term 'modern slavery' refers to all its various aspects, mostly including control, involuntary acts, and exploitation in various forms. Modern slavery, as defined for the purposes of the global estimates, is represented by the two main types: forced labour and forced marriage. Both, as well as many various

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forms that modern slavery can take (e.g., child slavery), refer to situations of exploitation¹ in which a person has no choice of action (e.g., refusing the labour or leaving a place freely) due to threats, violence, deception, abuse of power or other forms of coercion.²

Initially, the extent of modern slavery is to be outlined. The latest Global Estimates of Modern Slavery report³ found that fifty million people were living in modern slavery in 2021. Of these people, 28 million were trapped in forced labour and 22 million in forced marriage. Moreover, the latest estimates show trends of a significant increase in forced labour and forced marriage, women and children remaining disproportionately vulnerable.⁴ 'It is shocking that the situation of modern slavery is not improving. Nothing can justify the persistence of this fundamental abuse of human rights', says ILO Director-General, Guy Ryder.

Subsequently, it is essential to gain an overview of where and in what forms modern slavery emerges. Modern slavery occurs in almost all countries, with slightly more than half of all cases of forced labour and a quarter of all forced marriages occurring in middle- and high-income countries.⁵ The vast majority of modern slavery, however, is not even visible at first sight, because it takes place in private households or on private farms, where the public is not even aware of it. Examples can be found in the fishing industry, the fashion industry, cannabis factories or nail salons, to name just a few. The victims are forced to work in terrible conditions and/or for little or no pay. They also live in constant fear that something might happen to them or their family if they disobey. Escape is in most cases nearly impossible.

3.3. Human Trafficking

Essentially, human trafficking is one form of modern slavery. Nevertheless, a closer look at this aspect is important as it opens an even broader field of consequences that modern slavery can have.

The definition of human trafficking describes the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of people through force, fraud, or deception with the aim of exploiting them for profit. The victims may be partially paid (they often are not), but their payment is so low that they are basically slaves.

Examples include sexual slavery, labour trafficking, or the uncontrolled removal and trafficking of human organs. As it takes a well-structured plan to establish all stages of these

1 It shall be noted, however, that these situations do not cover the occasions when an individual is deprived of freedom based on the appropriate legal norms (e.g., a criminal put into prison).
2 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipec/documents/publication/wcms_854733.pdf (p. 11)
3 <https://publications.iom.int/books/global-estimates-modern-slavery-forced-labour-and-forced-marriage>
4 <https://www.iom.int/news/50-million-people-worldwide-modern-slavery>
5 *ibid.*

crimes, trafficking in human beings is increasingly recognised as a form of organised crime in which traffickers are earning huge sums of money.

3.4. Main Problems/Reasons

There are numerous reasons why modern forms of slavery can and do arise. Some of them are listed and elaborated in this section. It is important to note that the reasons for modern slavery are complex and interconnected.

Poverty

Poverty and especially extreme poverty (less than \$1.90 per day⁶) are one of the problems leading to Human Trafficking. The lack of money can drive people to migrate, which makes them more vulnerable for Human Trafficking. On the other hand, families might even sell their children, hoping to have a better life and/or to ensure their own survival. People living in poverty are vulnerable to exploitation and are often forced to work in exploitative conditions to survive. They may be tricked or coerced into working for very low wages, with no job security or benefits.

Lack of Education

Education is one of the Human Rights (Art. 26 Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁷). Still, there are many people who do not have access to at least the minimum education which should be granted to them. The absence or lack of education can find a close correlation with poverty. One of its various consequences is the limited access to the employment opportunities, which in its turn leads to the insufficient finances to support the life of an individual and their family. This is creating the conditions for such individuals to be more likely to be pushed into forced labour and slavery. In general, jobs that don't require basic or higher education (e. g. agricultural work, mining, fisheries⁸, construction work, and domestic service) are more likely to have bad working conditions and forms of slavery in comparison to jobs that require academic education.

Conflict and Natural Disasters

Conflict (armed) as well as natural disasters often leave people in a vulnerable situation and prone to exploitation. Displaced people or people who suffered in or from the conflict or a natural disaster may be forced to leave their homes and communities and have no means of supporting themselves (e.g., facing the lack of the basic needs such as water or food supplies). They may be pushed into exploitative work situations, such as forced labour or

6 <https://odi.org/en/insights/the-definition-of-extreme-poverty-has-just-changed-heres-what-you-need-to-know/>

7 <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

8 <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/policy-areas/fisheries/lang--en/index.htm>

sex trafficking. In this situation, human traffickers, promising better conditions and help, can rather easily coerce people.

In addition, conflicts can lead to the brutalization and the blunting of moral sensibilities. As a result, conflicts, as noted by OHCHR, usually lead to impunity so that human traffickers are more willing to break laws and traffic others for profit.⁹ During armed conflicts, for instance, women and girls are often victims of sexual trafficking, while children in general are forced to work as child soldiers.

Demand for Cheap Products

As the consumers are constantly requesting cheap products, the employers and producers may seek to maximise their own profits by paying low wages and providing poor working conditions although the prices of the products decrease. In this way, the search for cheap labour intensifies exploitation and modern slavery.

Lack of Safe and Legitimate Opportunities

When individuals are unable to find safe and legitimate employment opportunities, they become vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers who offer them false promises of good jobs or other illusionary opportunities. For example, in some countries, there may be limited formal job opportunities, and people may be forced to work in the informal sector, which is not regulated by the government. In such cases, workers may not have access to legal protections, such as minimum wage laws or health and safety regulations, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation.

As the COVID-19 pandemic increased the number of unemployment, especially in less economically developed countries, the demand for any work is high, mainly among women and the youth, who are already at a higher risk for trafficking.¹⁰

⁹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-trafficking-in-persons/trafficking-conflict-and-humanitarian-crises>
¹⁰ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/06/1093182>

4. Previous and Possible Solutions

There are numerous diverse approaches to combating modern slavery, which are also interrelated. Some of these are outlined below to indicate possible areas for further research and discussion:

4.1. Addressing the Root Causes

Firstly, **addressing the root causes** of modern slavery (some of them are mentioned in point 3.4) can form one approach to combating modern slavery. Targeting poverty, inequality and discrimination, for example, can help preventing vulnerable people from becoming victims in the first place. This can be implemented, among other strategies, through improvements regarding access to education, health care and economic opportunities for marginalised communities.

4.2. Raising Awareness

A further approach is the **awareness-raising** of the existence, extent, and impact of modern slavery in order to gain public support for efforts to combat this problem. With an increased awareness of the existence and types of modern slavery, people can recognise victims and report suspected cases. Moreover, the public can be informed about how to protect themselves from modern slavery and what actions they can take to help combat this crime. Successful awareness raising can lead to a reduction in demand for products and services associated with modern slavery. Thus, companies are encouraged to uphold human rights standards.

This approach is for instance implemented by the *Blue Heart Campaign*.¹¹ They are raising awareness around the globe of human trafficking and its impact on people and society in order to encourage involvement from governments, civil society, the corporate sector and individuals alike to inspire action and help prevent human trafficking.

The SHERLOC (Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws on Crime) portal is an online platform developed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) which aims to facilitate the sharing of information regarding combating transnational organised crime, including modern slavery.¹² By providing information, this contributes to the public's conscious engagement with the issue.

¹¹ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/blueheart/>
¹² <https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/en/st/home.html>

4.3. Enactment and Enforcement of Laws

The **enactment and enforcement of laws** is also an approach for combating modern slavery. The legislation and successful enforcement of stricter and more severe punishments for traffickers can have a deterrent effect and thus reduce modern slavery.

As a non-profit organisation, the *International Justice Mission* (IJM)¹³ works to enforce laws to combat slavery and, in particular, to strengthen the legal systems in countries where modern slavery is widespread. They work with victims of slavery and with law enforcement agencies around the world to help investigate and prosecute those responsible for modern slavery and human trafficking. The organisation also provides training and technical assistance for law enforcement agencies. Through its efforts to enforce laws against modern slavery, the IJM aims to discourage potential traffickers, ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice and ultimately prevent modern slavery from occurring in the first place. Overall, areas of legislative improvement may include stronger employment protections, punishment for employers who exploit workers, and increased regulation of supply chains.

4.4. Transparency in Supply Chains

The idea of **transparency in supply chains** is that companies can take steps such as conducting independent inspections to ensure that their supply chains are free from slavery and forced labour.

A key provision of the Modern Slavery Act¹⁴, a law passed by the UK Parliament in 2015, requires certain organisations to submit an annual slavery and human trafficking statement outlining what measures have been taken to eliminate slavery in their business or supply chain. A statement must be submitted by goods-supplying or services-providing companies that undertake business, or part of a business, in the UK and have a total annual turnover of £36 million or more. The statement must be published on the company's website and be available to the public. This aspect of the Modern Slavery Act aims to encourage companies to check their supply chains to identify modern slavery and to take action to combat it. Companies that fail to meet their obligations may face fines or reputational damage.

4.5. Support for Former Victims

Finally, action against modern slavery may also include **support for former victims** of modern slavery. In order to recover and start a new life, victims of modern slavery require special

¹³ <https://www.ijmuk.org/>

¹⁴ <https://www.rsmuk.com/ideas-and-insights/what-is-the-modern-slavery-act>

4 Previous and Possible Solutions

support, which can be offered by governments and NGOs, for instance. This may include medical assistance, housing, education and training, as well as support in finding work and reintegrating into society.

One example is the organisation IJM¹⁵, which works to ensure that victims of modern slavery receive practical help and support to cope with the consequences of exploitation and assist them in making the transition to a life of freedom.

Of special importance is this approach for child victims of modern slavery.¹⁶ “It’s not entirely clear who is responsible for the child. Quite often, frontline workers have not been provided with the specialist knowledge around trafficking in order to support child victims,” says Laura Durán, senior research and policy officer at Every Child Protected Against Trafficking (ECPAT UK). Proposals for solutions may include guardianship systems for any unaccompanied children, access to foster care and mental health services. Therefore, in 2010, the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children was established.¹⁷

4.6. Cooperation and Coordination

Overall, **cooperation and coordination** between governments, NGOs, businesses and other actors is important to develop and implement effective measures to combat modern slavery.

¹⁵ <https://www.ijmuk.org/>

¹⁶ One in four victims of modern slavery globally are children, with women and girls disproportionately affected by forced labour. Women make up 99% of victims in the commercial sex industry.

¹⁷ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking-fund.html>

5. How to Prepare for the Conference

This Committee Guide is intended to give you a first insight into the work of the UNHRC and this year's topic. Nevertheless, it can only be a starting point for your own research. To enable you to join the debate and engage in what we hope will be a constructive discussion, we encourage you to find out more about the issue and possible solutions.

While getting ready for this year's conference, you should prepare both a draft resolution and a policy statement where you can incorporate your research on the topic and, in particular, the position of the delegation you will be assigned to represent at the conference.

The **policy statement** is a brief statement of your country's position and opinion on the issue. Please note, that "your country" implies the country assigned to you and not the country where you come from. Policy statements should be more concise and not exceed 200 words.

The **draft resolution** is a document that sets out the current problems and proposes ideas for solutions. A resolution is technically a long sentence divided into clauses and sub-clauses; it must be also separated into preambulatory and operative clauses. Preambulatory clauses serve the purpose of explaining and justifying the action that will be proposed to be taken by the operative clauses. In drafting a resolution, it is more sensible to begin with the formulation of the operative clauses: once you have decided what action you think the UN should take, you can turn to the preamble to cover the background of the problem, argumentation, and reasoning behind the calls for action. Each draft resolution should be at least one page long and focused on the operative clauses. You will find more information on how such documents are written and structured in the **OLMUN Handbook**¹⁸. You may download the handbook via the link below. Alternatively, go to olmun.org » Downloads » This year's conference.

As we want to ensure that all of you can attend the conference well prepared, we would like to receive both the policy statement and the draft resolution from you by May 21st. You can simply send them to hrc@olmun.org. We will then read through the documents and possibly provide you with some feedback on how you can better prepare for the upcoming debates.

We would also love to get to know you a little better in order to plan our committee sessions: please let us know about your prior MUN experiences, the things you are most looking forward to, as well as things that might still be worrying you. You can simply include these

¹⁸ [HandbookOLMUN2023](#)

6 Final Words

matters in your email when sending your policy statement and draft resolution.

While the deadline is not mandatory, we will definitely have a list of delegates who either submit their drafts late or not at all. And bear in mind that this provides us with already a valid reason for the first fun-punishments ;)

Lastly, an understanding of the 'rules of the game', namely the **Rules of Procedures**, is essential for a smoothly running conference. Please get acquainted with them. You can find them also on the OLMUN website under the heading 'Downloads » This year's conference'.

6. Final Words

Finally, as important as researching and drafting the best possible resolutions and political statements are, we would like to remind you that OLMUN is also about having fun together. In other words, be well prepared (and take our deadlines seriously), but above all, look forward to the conference as an opportunity to get to know other points of view from various people of the diverse personal and academic background, as well as the chance to socialise and make new friends. Also, please be confident that if you are unsure or have any questions about the conference, the topic, or the materials, you can always contact us via email at: unhrc@olmun.org

We're deeply excited to get to know all of you and can't wait for this year's session of the HRC!

See you soon and all the best,

Alma & Tessa



7. Helpful Links

We have collected a few links that can help you to start off your research. However, keep in mind that they are just meant as a friendly tip. Your research can and should go beyond these links and does not necessarily have to include any of them.

7.1. General Information

- Regarding the Human Rights Committee:
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/home>
- View ratification status by each country:¹⁹
<https://indicators.ohchr.org/>
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights:
<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

7.2. Topic-specific Information

- 50 million people in modern slavery: UN report
<https://www.un.org/en/delegate/50-million-people-modern-slavery-un-report>
- Human Trafficking:
<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/crime.html>
- UN Protocol on Trafficking in Persons:
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/protocol-prevent-suppress-and-punish-trafficking-persons> (<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/protocol.html>)
- UN's response towards Human Trafficking:
<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/our-response.html>
- The blue heart campaign:
<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/blueheart/>
- The SHERLOC portal:
<https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/en/st/home.html>
- United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children
<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking-fund.html>
- Poverty:
<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/goal-01/>
- Facts and figures:

¹⁹ The ratification status on the OHCHR indicators website shows which human rights treaties have been signed and/or ratified by countries around the world. However, signing or ratifying a treaty does not necessarily guarantee that it will be fully implemented. Some countries may sign or ratify a treaty to show their commitment to human rights, while others may do so as a form of political posturing without intending to implement the treaty's provisions fully.

7 Helpful Links

- <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang--en/index.htm>
- Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022:
https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2022/GLO-TiP_2022_web.pdf
- UN's Office of the High Commissioner Fact Sheet 36 on Human Rights and Human Trafficking:
<https://www.humanrightscareers.com/issues/10-causes-of-human-trafficking/#sidr-main>
- Modern slavery is on the rise:
<https://www.un.org/en/observances/slavery-abolition-day>
- Netflix documentary by Thomas Robsahm and Tina Davis - Experts, activists and survivors discuss the widespread phenomenon of modern slavery and possible approaches to eradicate it (Trailer: <https://youtu.be/AHPmVh5WRu8>)



OLMUN 2023

**22nd International
Session**