

NorCal
Model United Nations
Conference



**United Nations Security
Council (UNSC)**

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Committee Type:
Specialized

**Agenda: Deliberating the Responsibility to Protect
Principle: Military Intervention in Libya**

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CHAIR INTRODUCTION

Hi! I'm Suhani, a junior at Dougherty Valley and your Head Chair for this committee. Having moved across the world over seven times, very few things have remained constant for me besides literature, music, and Model UN. My MUN journey started in sixth grade; now, 5 years and 23 conferences later, I hope that every delegate leaves this committee just as excited for their next conference as I was. When I'm not mid-debate, you'll probably find me writing, reading, and publishing books, grabbing boba, or watching a rom-com. I'm committed to making sure all delegates leave this conference not only well-versed in the ways of MUN, but also with lasting memories and connections. Looking forward to a weekend of diplomacy and at least one chaotic unmod!



Head Chair Email: suhanigoyal1864@gmail.com

Hi Delegates! I'm Shaurya, a junior at foothill high school, and your vice chair for this committee! This is my third year doing MUN! I like a lot of things, and MUN's one of them! I've been to around 15 conferences, and my best memory from all of them combined haven't been awards or accomplishments. It's been my growth as a delegate and speaker, going out of my comfort zone and having fun/becoming friends w delegates. In committee, I'm looking for improvement, effort, and genuine fun, my goal is for all of you to have an enjoyable and memorable experience! I really like hooks and balanced speeches, I'm a very outgoing delegate myself and I like to see that in delegates. I want you all as delegates to come out of your comfort zones and explore/try new things! I'm always open to questions, and if you ever have an issue, feel free to send an email to us chairs! Looking forward to seeing you all at the conference!



Vice Chair Email: sg5589@pleasantonusd.net

I. INTRODUCTION TO COMMITTEE

History

The UNSC was established in 1945, post World War 2 as a part of the United Nations, which was formed due to the failure of the League of Nations in Post-World War One. The UNSC was tasked with ensuring security and peace, and has played a significant role in responses to conflict, crises and threats to global stability. For multiple humanitarian crises, the council has allowed for international diplomacy and conflict resolution. Its actions and/or inactions have shaped modern history, and continue to do so every year.

Mandate

The UNSC holds unique powers under the UN Charter, allowing for it to: pass binding resolutions that every member state is required to follow, authorize military forces, and maintain peace and security in conflict-prone regions. Also under the UN Charter, 5 countries known as the Permanent 5 (China, France, Russia, UK, US), hold significant powers over other members in the UNSC such as vetoing.

Overview

Our committee is set on March 17th, 2011. Currently, the question facing the UNSC is how to act and respond Time/place setting (March 2011, Libyan Civil War backdrop)

Please note that this is a NO TECH committee. Bring your phone, a charger, sticky notes or index cards (whichever you prefer to pass notes to delegates), printed prep, and a good attitude! Feel free to bring snacks if you get hungry in committee.

Additionally, don't use AI, plain-cut and simple. We will run your position papers through multiple AI-checkers, and if you are flagged, we will talk to you about it and resolve it. It most definitely will result in disqualification from committee awards and could jeopardize your attendance at future conferences.

II. TOPIC BACKGROUND

A) Historical Background

Libya was ruled by Muammar Gaddafi from 1969, when he overthrew the monarchy and established a tightly controlled authoritarian regime. Though the country saw oil wealth and periods of international cooperation, power remained centralized, dissent was crushed, and long-standing regional inequalities created deep resentment, especially between Tripoli and Benghazi. These tensions simmered for decades beneath a surface of state propaganda and suppression.

In early 2011, as the Arab Spring spread across the Middle East, protests erupted in Benghazi against Gaddafi's rule. What began as peaceful demonstrations quickly escalated into armed conflict after regime forces responded violently. Rebel groups seized control of eastern cities, while Gaddafi vowed to "cleanse Libya house by house," raising fears of mass atrocities. As government forces advanced toward Benghazi in March, the humanitarian stakes became urgent.

The international and regional response was swift but divided. The Arab League broke precedent by calling for a no-fly zone, while the African Union urged negotiation. The UN passed Resolution 1970 (sanctions and an ICC referral) on February 26. But as violence worsened, the Security Council passed Resolution 1973 on March 17, authorizing "all necessary measures" to protect civilians, including a no-fly zone. This marked a major invocation of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle, and set the stage for one of the largest NATO interventions ever conducted under the R2P principle; and possibly one of its most devastating failures.

1969 - Muammar Gaddafi seizes power in Libya

Gaddafi overthrows King Idris I in a military coup and establishes an authoritarian regime under the “Jamahiriya” system.

January 2011 - Arab Spring begins

Popular uprisings erupt in Tunisia and Egypt, inspiring anti-government sentiment across the region, including in Libya.

February 15, 2011 - protests in Benghazi

Demonstrations begin after the arrest of a human rights lawyer. Security forces respond with violence, sparking nationwide unrest.

February 26 - The UNSC Resolution 1970 passes

The Security Council imposes sanctions on Libya, freezes Gaddafi's assets, bans arms transfers, and refers the situation to the ICC.

March 15 - Gaddafi's forces seige Benghazi

Reports indicate an imminent assault on the rebel-held city. Gaddafi promises “no mercy.”

March 17 - Resolution 1973

Authorizes “all necessary measures” to protect civilians, including a no-fly zone. Intervention begins under the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) framework.

March 19 - NATO begins airstrikes

Military operations begin under Operation Odyssey Dawn, targeting Gaddafi's air defenses and military forces near Benghazi.

B) Key Issues

i. The Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

The R2P response is a commitment adopted globally at the UN World Summit in 2005. It was based on work from the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, setting a standard for the global responsibility of states on three key pillars. Those being: The responsibility of a state to protect populations against genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, to uphold these responsibilities by assisting states and taking action in a very timely manner when a state fails to uphold the responsibility for its own people. R2P overall originates from the global failure in Rwanda and Srebrenica between 1994-1995, and has, even after its implementation, faced critique. Although some may say it is a step towards global human rights, some say it has selective application due to its potential for abuse by technologically advanced powerful states. Currently, there's a tension/debate between state sovereignty and when international forces can intervene, which overall brings concern to the issue of authority for R2P.

ii. Case Study: Military Intervention in Libya

The 2011 Libyan crisis became the first real test of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine since its adoption in 2005, raising urgent questions about its scope, legitimacy, and long-term consequences. As Gaddafi's forces closed in on Benghazi with explicit threats of mass violence, international actors framed military intervention as a humanitarian necessity. However, critics questioned whether R2P was being used selectively or as a cover for regime change. The Arab League's unprecedented call for a no-fly zone added regional legitimacy, but also reflected geopolitical motives, including concerns over refugee flows and instability. NATO powers led the push for intervention, but offered no clear long-term plan for Libya's future. At stake is not only the protection of civilians, but the precedent set for future interventions: whether sovereignty can be overridden in the name of human rights, and who gets to decide when that line is crossed.

iii. Selective Intervention

Although R2P is a measure in place, one of the problems in international relations at this time is selective intervention; where countries are only intervening selectively. Most crises are ignored while some are intervened in, often raising eyebrows about the matter of self-benefit, as in the true motivations behind the military action, or fairness. It overall undermines the credibility that countries have by following R2P, as it may seem to be strategic or economic interests in mind leading to unpredictable intervention and no true fulfillment of R2P. In crises such as Syria and Yemen whom have both seen tremendous loss, interventions are significantly inconsistent when compared with situations such as Libya. Overall, the lack of consistency creates tension between the moral responsibility to protect and the political reality of global power. Selective intervention as a whole brings eyes to the so-called legitimacy of intervention and how the international scheme cannot fully ensure accountability leading to extensive problems.

C) Current Situation

As of March 17, 2011, Libya is on the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe. After weeks of violent clashes between anti-government rebels and forces loyal to Muammar Gaddafi, the conflict has escalated rapidly. Government troops have launched a brutal counteroffensive, retaking territory and pushing toward Benghazi, the de facto capital of the opposition. In a public address, Gaddafi has vowed to show “no mercy” to civilians and rebels alike, prompting fears of a potential massacre if the city falls.

The UN Security Council has already adopted Resolution 1970, which imposed an arms embargo, asset freezes, a travel ban, and referred the situation to the International Criminal Court. However, the humanitarian situation has worsened since, and pressure is building for stronger action. Inside the UNSC, diplomatic divisions are sharpening. France, the UK, and the U.S. are pushing for more aggressive measures, including authorization for military intervention under the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine. Russia and China, however, have expressed concern about violating Libyan sovereignty and the potential for a dangerous, possibly fatal outcome of regime change.

As delegates, your task is to deliberate whether and how to escalate the international response. Will you authorize a no-fly zone? Broaden sanctions? Approve direct military force? Define strict limits, or leave room for interpretation? The world is watching: and the next 24 hours may decide the fate of thousands.

III. CHARACTER POLICY

1. **Barack Obama (United States)** - Supports UNSC-backed no-fly zone, and strongly opposes ground troops, advocating for NATO/Arab League burden-sharing.
2. **David Cameron (United Kingdom)** - Pushes for urgent military action under R2P, seeing Libya as a test of Western resolve.
3. **Nicolas Sarkozy (France)** - Recognized rebels early and demands rapid strikes as a moral and strategic necessity.
4. **Dmitry Medvedev (Russia)** - Opposes regime change and prefers ceasefire and diplomacy, being wary of NATO overreach.
5. **Hu Jintao (China)** - Rejects foreign intervention, instead backing humanitarian aid and political dialogue.
6. **Angela Merkel (Germany)** - Skeptical of strikes, rather favoring sanctions and diplomatic dialogue.
7. **Manmohan Singh (India)** - Cautions against hasty R2P use and supports targeted sanctions over force.
8. **Goodluck Jonathan (Nigeria)** - Supports AU/Arab League role and backs a no-fly zone if UNSC approved
9. **Michel Suleiman (Lebanon)** - Aligns with Arab League and urges swift UNSC action against Gaddafi.
10. **Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani (Qatar)** - Pushes for Arab role in no-fly zone, and ready to join a NATO-led effort.

IV. QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- To what extent does military intervention under R2P risk being used as a tool for regime change rather than civilian protection?
- How should the international community balance the principle of state sovereignty with the urgency of preventing mass atrocities in civil conflicts like Libya's?
- What limits should be placed on actions taken under R2P to prevent escalation or long-term instability post-intervention?
- How can the UNSC ensure that actions taken under R2P have clear, measurable objectives and exit strategies?
- In what ways could non-military tools (e.g., sanctions, mediation, humanitarian aid) have been more effective in Libya compared to armed intervention?
- How should regional organizations like the Arab League be involved in authorizing and implementing R2P operations?

V. CHARACTER LIST

1. United States – Barack Obama
2. United Kingdom – David Cameron
3. France – Nicolas Sarkozy
4. Russia – Dmitry Medvedev
5. China – Hu Jintao
6. Germany – Angela Merkel
7. India – Manmohan Singh
8. South Africa – Jacob Zuma
9. Brazil – Dilma Rousseff
10. Nigeria – Goodluck Jonathan
11. Lebanon – Michel Suleiman
12. Argentina – Cristina Fernández de Kirchner
13. Italy – Silvio Berlusconi
14. Turkey – Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
15. Egypt – Mohamed Hussein Tantawi
16. Tunisia – Fouad Mebazaa
17. Qatar – Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani
18. Saudi Arabia – Abdullah bin Abdulaziz
19. United Arab Emirates – Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan
20. Iran – Mahmoud Ahmadinejad
21. Algeria – Abdelaziz Bouteflika
22. Japan – Naoto Kan
23. Canada – Stephen Harper
24. Portugal – José Sócrates
25. Gabon – Ali Bongo Ondimba
26. Bosnia and Herzegovina – Nermin Nikšić
27. Spain – José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero
28. Norway – Jens Stoltenberg
29. Indonesia – Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono
30. Australia – Julia Gillard

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