



III. SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN, & CULTURAL COMMITTEE TOPIC GUIDE

MID-AMERICAN MODEL UNITED NATIONS
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A. Advancement of Women (26)

Decades of collaboration, agreements, and commitments for the advancement of women remind the global community of the need for ongoing commitment to continue advancing women's rights and provide an intersectional approach to social and cultural issues. Women continue to face economic hardship, gender-based violence, exclusion from leadership positions, and access to education. Further, women and girls in areas of conflict, belonging to ethnic minorities, and migrants are especially vulnerable to exploitation and violence. Additionally, violence against women remains a chronic issue, as one in three women worldwide experience violence in their lifetime.²³ On a political level, women remain largely excluded from government positions limiting their ability to participate in influential policy decisions and resolutions.²⁴ This exclusion from governance is often mirrored by exclusion from educational opportunities and the economy.

While the world continues to face environmental, political, and economic crises, the global community cannot forget the importance of human rights and value in uplifting individuals of all genders and identities. At the core of these long-standing global issues is the influence of social expectations of who can self-determine and contribute socio-economic value to the greater political community. Especially for women who are continuously denied positions of authority and exclusion in the peace process.

The UN Women's Commission on the Status of Women serves as an active participant in defining goals and developing an approach to addressing the myriad of inequalities faced by women. During the 2023 Commission on the Status of Women adopted Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.²⁵ Further the Commission reviewed the importance of challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls.²⁶ While addressing the advancement of women, consideration for rural areas and cultural practices cannot be forgotten. Any further actions taken for the advancement of women should be considered with a comprehensive point of view that reflects current advancements and long-standing barriers for all women.

²³ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>.

²⁴ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures>.

²⁵ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw67-2023>.

²⁶ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw67-2023>.

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B. Expulsion of aliens (83)

It is well settled in international law that each sovereign state has the right to expel aliens found within its borders.²⁷ While the legality on the topic has been considered by another committee,²⁸ the effect of expelling aliens is wide-reaching and invokes numerous human rights considerations.²⁹ Accordingly, limitations to expulsion have also been recognized in order to provide aliens with “protection against return to face grave violations of human rights, procedural safeguards during deportation procedures, and protection with regard to the methods of expulsions.”³⁰ Certain classes of aliens, like migrant workers and refugees, may also receive “additional protection against expulsions and/or benefit from additional procedural guarantees.”³¹

The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, together with its 1967 Protocol, established a refugee’s right not to be expelled from a country when doing so would subject the refugee to threats to their life or freedom upon return to their country of origin.³² Currently, 149 United Nations Member States have ratified the Convention and/or its Protocol – but an additional 44 Member States have not.³³ While there have been recent allegations of signatory Member States expelling aliens in violation of the Convention and its Protocol,³⁴ another issue to be considered is how non-signatory States, which are home to large amounts of refugees, have been treating aliens.³⁵

In addition to refugees, the United Nations has recognized the need to protect migrant workers from expulsion. In 1990, the United Nations General Assembly passed the International Convention on

²⁷ “United Nations General Assembly Expulsion of Aliens Memorandum by the Secretariat” (July 10, 2006), https://legal.un.org/ilc/documentation/english/a_cn4_565.pdf.

²⁸ United Nations General Assembly. “Sixth Committee (Legal) - 78th Session, Expulsion of Aliens (Agenda item 81),” (last accessed Jan. 10, 2024), https://www.un.org/en/ga/sixth/78/expulsion_of_alien.html;

²⁹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. “Discussion Paper: Expulsion of aliens in international human rights law” (Sept. 2006), <https://www.unhcr.org/us/media/ohchr-discussion-paper-expulsion-alien-international-human-rights-law>.

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ *Id.*

³² “Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees” (last accessed Jan. 10, 2024), <https://www.unhcr.org/media/convention-and-protocol-relating-status-refugees>.

³³ Janmyr, Maja. University of Oxford Refugee Studies Centre. “Non-signatory States and the International Refugee Regime” (last accessed Jan. 10, 2024), <https://www.fmreview.org/issue67/janmyr>; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. “States Parties to the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, (Apr. 17, 2015), <https://www.unhcr.org/us/media/states-parties-1951-convention-and-its-1967-protocol>.

³⁴ Amnesty International. “Trinidad and Tobago: Authorities Must Stop Deporting Refugees and Asylum Seekers” (Aug. 17, 2023), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/08/trinidad-tobago-must-stop-deporting-refugees/>; University of Oxford Refugee Studies Centre. “Ukraine: The UK is failing to meet its obligation under the 1951 Refugee Convention” (March 10, 2022), <https://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/news/ukraine-the-uk-is-failing-to-meet-its-obligations-under-the-1951-refugee-convention>.

³⁵ Janmyr, Maja. University of Oxford Refugee Studies Centre. “Non-signatory States and the International Refugee Regime” (last accessed Jan. 10, 2024), <https://www.fmreview.org/issue67/janmyr>; Amnesty international. “Qatar: Migrant Workers Illegally Expelled During COVID-19 Pandemic” (April 15, 2020), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/04/qatar-migrant-workers-illegally-expelled-during-covid19-pandemic>.

the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.³⁶ In 2004, the first meeting of the committee established to monitor implementation of the Convention was held,³⁷ but the need to assure the protection of aliens' human rights, including the protection from improper expulsion, remains a vital need for the international community.³⁸

³⁶ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. "International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families" (Dec. 18, 1990), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-convention-protection-rights-all-migrant-workers>.

³⁷ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. "Introduction: Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families," (last accessed Jan. 10, 2024), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cmw/introduction>.

³⁸ Global Migration Group. "Exploitation and Abuse of International Migrants, Particularly Those in an Irregular Situation: A Human Rights Approach" (last accessed Jan. 10, 2024), https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/2013/2013_GMG_Thematic_Paper.pdf.

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C. Crimes Against Humanity (82)

The term “crimes against humanity” has evolved in the international community since the eighteenth century. These crimes are recognized under international customary law, through the International Criminal Court and by other international tribunals. Individual nations have also adopted definitions of crimes against humanity in their own domestic criminal laws. Although crimes against humanity have not been codified in any international treaties, they are prohibited and considered a peremptory norm in international law. The 1998 Rome Statute provides a list of crimes that are recognized throughout the international community as crimes against humanity. Crimes Against Humanity are defined in the Rome Statute as “acts when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack”³⁹ including but not limited to murder, extermination, enslavement and torture. Unlike genocide, crimes against humanity can be a widespread attack against any group of individuals, regardless of their group membership. After the case *Doe v. Saravia*, the international community adopted the idea that even the assassination of one person can constitute a crime against humanity.

Although there have been efforts to define and prevent crimes against humanity, there are still many instances of them occurring today. Amnesty International highlighted many current cases of crimes against humanity globally in their 2022/2023 report on the state of human rights in the world⁴⁰. Whether certain actions should be considered crimes against humanity has been fiercely argued within the Russo-Ukrainian War as well as within the Israel Palestine conflict. China has also been accused of committing massive human rights violations amounting to crimes against humanity against the Uighurs and other Muslim minorities within their borders. Further, crimes against humanity occur in both the private and public sector, meaning nations, companies, and individuals are all oftentimes party to crimes against humanity. For example, French arms companies have been investigated for their complicity in alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity in Yemen for exporting arms to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

This committee should consider the current definition of crimes against humanity, how these crimes are prosecuted throughout the international community, and whether the courts should expand or alter their understanding of crimes against humanity. Establishing legitimate and accountable international institutions, eliminating corruption, and supporting a strong diverse society are just some of the goals the United Nations has established in order to combat crimes against humanity.⁴¹ While individual states have the primary obligation to prevent crimes against humanity, the international community must also address these crimes as they constitute threats to international peace and security.

³⁹ 1988 Rome Statute - [RS-Eng.pdf \(icc-cpi.int\)](#)

⁴⁰ [Amnesty International Report 2022/23: The state of the world's human rights - Amnesty International](#)

⁴¹ [United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect](#)

