



GLCMUN X

COMMISSION GUIDE

**Special Political and Decolonization
Committee**

Presidents: Gabriela Zuñiga & Manuela Durán

Supervisor: Pavlos Charalambis

WWW.GLCMUN.ORG

Index



01. ¡Welcome to GLCMUN X!

Welcome from the Secretary General
Welcome from the Presidents

02. About the Committee

Introduction to the committee

03. Topic 1

Historical Context
Current Situation
Key Points & Guiding Questions
References

04. Topic 2

Historical Context
Current Situation
Key Points & Guiding Questions
References

05. Final Recommendations

How to make a good argument?
Recommendations from the Presidents

WELCOME TO GLCMUN X!

Ten years ago, what began as a small academic project with big aspirations has transformed into a legacy of learning, inclusion, and transformation.

Today, with pride and excitement, I welcome you to the tenth edition of GLCMUN, a space created for each of you to shine with your ideas, your passion, and your ability to make an impact on the world.

GLCMUN X is much more than a Model United Nations; it is a place where the voices of young people like you become powerful tools to envision a better future. It is a place where bonds are built, where you learn to negotiate, debate, and lead, and where you understand the complexities of the world to seek real solutions to the challenges we face as a society.

Personally, this model is my dream. Since I became involved in this community, every committee, every debate, and every participant has taught me something valuable, and today, having the opportunity to lead this model as your Secretary-General in its tenth edition is an indescribable honor. What fills me with the most pride is knowing that this dream is not just mine, but belongs to everyone who is part of it: the secretariat, delegates, chairs, staff, sponsors, and allies.

Over these ten years, we have demonstrated that youth has the power to transform realities, and this edition will be no exception. In the coming months, I want you to challenge yourselves, to dare to think differently, and to be creative in your proposals. Remember that this space is designed for you to learn not only about international politics but also about empathy, teamwork, and the importance of listening.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank you for being here, for believing in this dream, and for contributing your talents and enthusiasm to this project. I know many of you have worked hard to get here, and I want you to know that all that effort will be worth it. This model is as much yours as it is mine, and my greatest wish is for you to have an unforgettable experience that inspires your academic future and your life project.

These ten years represent a journey filled with lessons, challenges, and shared achievements, and we could not have reached this point without the commitment of everyone who has been part of GLCMUN over time. That is why I want to invite you to be part of this celebration and to give your best in this historic edition. I hope that, at the end of these three days, you leave not only with knowledge and learning but also with unforgettable memories, new friendships, and the certainty that you have the power to change the world, one idea at a time.

Sincerely,



Sebastián Ávila Cabal
Secretario General

President's Letter

Dear delegates of SPECPOL,

It is an honor to be your presidents this year at the X edition of the GLCMUN. We are Manuela Duran and Gabriela Zuñiga, 11th grade students who have worked really hard during these past months to make this model an unforgettable experience that you will remember forever. As your presidents we aspire that you reach your maximum potential while debating crucial and relevant problems all around the world.

We chose this specific commission because we strongly believe that it is of utmost importance to raise awareness about the persistent effects of historical injustices and their impact on contemporary global issues. During the debate, all of you will have the opportunity to explore how legacies of colonialism and historical conflicts continue to be present nowadays in various regions around the world. This includes evaluating how these historical occurrences connect with contemporary political, economic and social dynamics, contributing to ongoing instability and conflict. We believe that understanding these issues is crucial to build a more just and equitable world order. By highlighting how history affects the present, we hope to foster critical reflection towards meaningful and sustainable solutions.

During the debate, we encourage you to embrace character and involve yourself in these topics with compromise and passion. All of your contributions will be key to start making effective solutions. We invite you to seize this opportunity as something supremely exciting, which will fill you with much wisdom and knowledge. We are a hundred percent sure that you will develop different skills that you probably didn't even know you had. Remember that we are totally available for any type of question or doubt you may have about the whole model in general, that is why we also wanted to tell you that you can have complete confidence in us, we want to help you so that you get the most out of this opportunity. You can contact us through the official committee mail specpolglcmun@gmail.com if you need help. Enjoy this experience!

Together we can make a difference and contribute to the positive change that our planet and our community needs desperately.

With gratitude and high expectative,

Gabriela Zuñiga

President

Manuela Durán

President

Introduction to the Committee

History of SPECPOL

Established in 1993, SPECPOL emerged from the merger of the Decolonization Committee (formerly the Fourth Committee) and the Special Political Committee. Initially, the Fourth Committee was solely responsible for trusteeship and decolonization matters. However, following the independence of all United Nations trust territories and the subsequent dismantling of the trusteeship system, the committee's workload diminished. To optimize resources and address a broader range of political issues, the Fourth Committee combined with the Special Political Committee, which had been created to handle specific political matters not covered by other committees (United Nations General Assembly Fourth Committee, n.d.).

Vision and Mission

SPECPOL's vision encompasses promoting international peace, security, and cooperation by addressing complex political issues that transcend national boundaries. Its mission includes:

- **Decolonization:** Overseeing the process of granting independence to colonial countries and peoples, ensuring the right to self-determination is upheld.
- **Peacekeeping Operations:** Reviewing and assessing United Nations peacekeeping missions to maintain international peace and security.
- **Peaceful Uses of Outer Space:** Encouraging international collaboration in the exploration and utilization of outer space for peaceful purposes.
- **Assistance to Palestinian Refugees:** Supervising the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to support Palestinian refugees.
- **Public Information:** Evaluating the dissemination of information to promote global awareness and understanding of the United Nations' objectives and activities.

Structure of SPECPOL

As one of the six main committees of the United Nations General Assembly, SPECPOL comprises all 193 Member States, each possessing equal voting rights. The committee operates with a Bureau, typically consisting of a Chair, three Vice-Chairs, and a Rapporteur, elected based on equitable geographical representation. This structure

ensures inclusive and balanced deliberations on the wide-ranging issues within SPECPOL's purview (Special Political and Decolonization Committee, n.d.).

Normative Framework and Procedures

SPECPOL functions under the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, adhering to established protocols for debate, decision-making, and resolution adoption. The committee addresses agenda items allocated by the General Assembly, often considering reports from various subsidiary bodies and specialized agencies. Resolutions and decisions are typically adopted by consensus or, when necessary, by a majority vote. While SPECPOL's resolutions are generally non-binding, they carry significant moral and political weight, influencing international norms and guiding Member States' actions.

Key Areas of Focus

- **Decolonization:** Despite the significant progress made since the mid-20th century, SPECPOL continues to address the situation of Non-Self-Governing Territories, monitoring their development and advocating for complete self-governance (Special Political and Decolonization Committee, n.d.).
- **Peacekeeping Operations:** The committee evaluates the effectiveness of ongoing peacekeeping missions, considering aspects such as mandate implementation, resource allocation, and operational challenges. These assessments contribute to enhancing the efficiency and responsiveness of peacekeeping efforts worldwide (Special Political and Decolonization Committee, n.d.).
- **Outer Space Affairs:** SPECPOL promotes the peaceful exploration and use of outer space, encouraging international cooperation to prevent the militarization of space and ensure equitable access to space-related benefits (Special Political and Decolonization Committee, n.d.).
- **Palestinian Refugees:** The committee oversees the activities of UNRWA, addressing the humanitarian needs of Palestinian refugees and seeking sustainable solutions to their longstanding plight (Special Political and Decolonization Committee, n.d.).
- **Public Information:** SPECPOL reviews the United Nations' public information policies and activities, aiming to enhance global awareness and understanding of the organization's work and objectives (Special Political and Decolonization Committee, n.d.).

References

- Special Political and Decolonization Committee. (n.d.). *Special Political and Decolonization (Fourth Committee)*. United Nations. Retrieved March 26, 2025, from <https://www.un.org/en/ga/fourth/>
- United Nations General Assembly Fourth Committee. (n.d.). In *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Retrieved March 26, 2025, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_General_Assembly_Fourth_Committee

Topic 1: Contemporary Colonialism In Yemen and Its Impact on Regional Stability.

Historical Context

To fully grasp the whole complex situation that has shaped Yemen over the recent decades, it is imperative to develop the roots of contemporary colonialism and how this continues to influence the country's political instability, economic struggles and humanitarian crises. Contemporary colonialism refers to the political, economic and cultural influence that foreign powers exert on other countries. Understanding Yemen's historical trajectory is fundamental to comprehend the modern challenges it faces, especially in a context of regional security and international relations. Yemen has faced decades of internal conflict, exacerbated by foreign involvement, that has fueled an important number of divisions and proxy wars, which means that it is a conflict fought by one or more major powers that do not involve themselves directly. The nation has also suffered from economic devastation, with an infrastructure crisis, food insecurity, and mass displacement, affecting millions of citizens. According to the United Nations, over 80% of Yemen's population needs humanitarian aid, with a wide variety of health crises. Beyond this, the geopolitical structure between two strong regional powers, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, has turned Yemen into a battlefield for influence, which led to the destabilization of the whole country.

The roots of Yemen's colonial past, trace back to the 19th century when the British Empire and the Ottoman Empire, established control over different regions of the country. The British force occupied the city of Aden in 1839, which was driven by the strategic importance of Yemen's location, serving as a critical stop between the maritime trade route of India and Europe. Aden became a vital refueling station for the British's naval fleet and strategic commercial hub, particularly for coal. The British influence in the south was twofold, direct colonial control over Aden and indirect governance over the regions surrounding it. Simultaneously, the Ottomans exerted influence over northern Yemen, seeking to consolidate their control through military and administrative means. Despite this, Ottoman rule faced significant resistance from the local Zaydi Shia Imamate, which

maintained strong autonomy and frequently collided with imperial authorities (Halliday, 2000).

The entire division between the northern and southern regions laid the base for Yemen's fractured political landscape. Whereas northern Yemen remained under the influence of the Zaydi imamate. The Zaydi sect, a branch of Shia Islam, established a theocratic political system in northern Yemen, where political authority was intertwined with religious leadership. This imamate maintained considerable autonomy and was significantly resistant to foreign influences, including those from the Ottoman Empire. Regardless of the Ottoman's attempts to exert control over northern Yemen during 1872, they endured persistent rebellions from the Zaydi community. This resistance ended with the Ottomans departing in 1918, meanwhile southern Yemen remained a British safeguard until 1967. The harsh differences in governance and development between these two regions cultivated entrenched political and social tensions, which endure to this day (Dresch, 1993).

Following the withdrawal of colonial powers, Yemen experienced multiple conflicts and power struggles. These colonial influences left permanent consequences on Yemen's socio-political structure. British and Ottoman policies increased the economical and political disparities between northern and southern regions, which contributed to the fragmentation of the national identity. In 1962, a revolution in the north led to the establishment of the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR), supported by Egypt's president, Gamal Abdel Nasser and his vision of Arab unity nationalism. This sparked a civil war between republican forces and the royalist faction loyal to the Zaydi imamate. This conflict lasted until 1970, leaving the republicans victorious, marking the marginalization of the Zaydi political power. Simultaneously, in the south, anti-colonial movements grew stronger, culminating in the British forces departing in 1967, which led to the creation of the People's

Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), which affiliated with the Soviet Union and implemented a socialist system of governance (Burrowes, 2010).



Figure 1 Yemen Arab republic and People's democratic republic before unification (Ed maps, 2015).

For decades, rivalry among the two Yemen's remained, exacerbated by ideological differences and foreign intervention. The Cold War further increased these divisions, the north receiving West support and

the south affiliating with the Eastern Bloc. Regardless of numerous efforts for reconciliation, the country remained politically fragmented until its unification in 1990 under the mandate of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, a Yemeni politician and military officer (Schmitz, 2011).

Notwithstanding ideological differences, economic and political tensions pushed North and South Yemen towards unification, which was officially declared on May 22, 1990, under the mandate of North Yemen's President Ali Abdullah Saleh. However, unification did not resolve the fundamental political and economic differences. The south felt progressively excluded, leading to the 1994 Yemen civil war, in which northern forces became victorious, which solidified President Saleh's rule all over the country.

By the late 90's, frustration grew within the Zaydi community in northern Yemen. In answer to their political and economic marginalization, the Houthi movement, named after their leader, Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi, who is a Zaidi Shia rebel movement from northern Yemen, which was created in 1990 as a political and religious armed group opposing to the Saudi influence and government corruption in Yemen. In 2004, the Houthis launched the first armed rebellion against the Yemeni government in the Sa'dah province. Hussein Badreddin al-Houthi,



Figure 2 Yemen unification (1990)

leader of the Houthis, was murdered by government forces that same year, which radicalized the movement and initiated a series of six wars between the Yemeni government and the Houthis from 2004 to 2010.

Key Post-Unification events:

- 1994 - Yemen Civil War: Southern separatists tried to break the unified Yemen, leading to a brief but intense conflict that resulted in northern forces merging authority.
- 2000 - The USS Cole Bombing in Aden: Al-Qaeda, a militant Islamist armed group attacked the USS Cole, which was a ship that was fueling in the Aden gulf, killing 17 American sailors and highlighting the growing presence of extremist's groups in Yemen (NHHHC, 2024).
- 2004 - The Houthi Rebellion in North Yemen: Marked the beginning of armed conflicts between Houthi members and the Yemeni Government, driven by complaints over marginalization and foreign intervention.
- 2009 - The Saudi Houthi Border conflict: Saudi Arabia launched military operations against the Houthis, concerned about their growing influence near its southern border.

In 2011, Yemen became part of the broader Arab Spring movement, as mass protests exploded against President Ali Abdullah Saleh's rule. After months of demonstrations, Saleh agreed to step down the president's charge, in exchange for immunity from prosecution. The vice president, Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, exerted

control in 2012, but he struggled to accept that Yemen was going through a critical crisis.

For decades Yemen has been afflicted by internal conflicts, foreign influences, and ideological divisions. From the fall of the Zaydi imamate to British colonial rule, and the rise of the Houthi movement, Yemen's history is a testament to the perduring impact of foreign influences and internal fracture. The Yemen unification in 1990 did nothing but create a fragile political structure vulnerable to future conflicts. Up to this day, Yemen continues to be one of the most unstable regions in the Middle East. A devastating humanitarian crisis has engulfed the nation, fueled by war, economic collapse and foreign interventions.



Figure 3 Arab Spring protests (2011)

Current Situation

Yemen, a small country situated on the Arabian Peninsula, has become a focal point of severe humanitarian distress due to an entrenched civil conflict. Many analysts claim that the ongoing hostilities, now spanning eight years, have evolved into a complex proxy war. The Houthi rebels, who have put an end to the Yemeni government and are supported by Iran, engaged in a fight with a multinational fusion headed by Saudi Arabia. The involvement of other actors, such as separatist groups supported by the UAE and Islamist militant groups, further continues to complicate the current situation.

More than four million individuals have been uprooted by this extended struggle, which has brought about genuine wellbeing issues like cholera flare-ups and intense therapeutic supply deficiencies. Moreover, there are looming threats of famine. A prolonged cease-fire observed by warring parties in 2022 offered optimism for a diplomatic resolution

to the conflict; however, this momentum was lost when efforts to extend the truce failed in October that year (Robinson, 2023).

Since 2015, Yemen has been the center of an incessant war and a multifaceted human rights emergency. This circumstance has come about within the passing of over 10,000 Yemenis out of an add up to the population of roughly 27 million. Past these casualties, a significant number of fatalities have happened due to secondary impacts such as the collapse of healthcare foundations and deficiencies in basic assets like nourishment, water, and medicine. The United Nations reports that an average of 75 people have been either killed or injured daily since the conflict began. By May 2017, over 17 million people were facing severe food insecurity-representing a notable increase from previous months-and more than 40,000 suspected cholera cases had been documented. Projections at that time suggested that cholera cases could exceed 300,000 by year's end. The cumulative impact underscores Yemen's status as one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises (Maktary, S., & Smith, K. (2017).



Figure 1. Members of the Houthi movement participate in a military parade in Yemen's capital, Sanaa. Mohammed Huwais (2023).

According to Omairan (2021), efforts to resolve the Yemen crisis have involved numerous peace initiatives presented by Arab nations, such as Kuwait and Oman, as well as the international community since 2011. However, these endeavors have been hindered by several factors. Researchers such as Salisbury (2019), Forster (2017), and the Sana's Center (2020) argue that a critical impediment has been the Houthi rebel's hesitance to lock in significant arrangements and share control peacefully. Furthermore, they highlight the Yemeni government's need for genuine commitment to accomplishing peace, which has complicated these endeavors.

Yemen has truly been trapped with deep-seated devout and social divisions between its northern and southern locales, exacerbated by the legacy of European colonialism. The advanced Yemeni state was set up in 1990 through the unification of the U.S. and Saudi-backed Yemeni Middle easterner Republic within the north, and the Soviet-supported People's Democratic Republic of Yemen within the south. Ali Abdullah Saleh, who had administered North Yemen since 1988, was the pioneer of this newly united country.

However, this unity was short-lived; for a long time afterward, southern separatists rapidly withdrew, recently re-emerging as the Southern Development in 2007 to advocate for more prominent independence inside Yemen. Concurrently, militant groups such as Al-Qaeda within the Middle eastern Promontory (AQAP) and Ansar al-Sharia have secured domains in southern and eastern regions. The Houthi movement, rooted among northern Zydi Shiites, engaged in six rebellions against Saleh's government between 2004 and 2010.

The United States began supporting Saleh early in the 2000s due to shared counterterrorism interests aimed at combating al-Qaeda affiliates. This cooperation intensified following a suicide attack on a U.S. Navy warship by an al-Qaeda group that would later become AQAP. Since then, Washington has provided over \$850 million in military aid to Yemen.

In response to the increasing domestic and international pressure, Ali Abdullah Saleh relinquished power in 2012 after securing immunity from prosecution. His vice president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, took over as interim president in a move encouraged by the Inlet Participation Chamber (GCC), with support from the UAE. As part of this transitional system, the UN-backed National Exchange Conference (NDC) was assembled in 2013 to draft an unused constitution satisfactory to Yemen's assorted groups. Be that as it may, the conference eventually concluded without settling key debate over control dispersion among these groups (Robinson, 2023).

The Houthi movement currently exercises control over approximately 40% of Yemen's territory, with a strong presence in the north, particularly in Sa'adah and major economic hubs like Sana's Ibb, and Al-Hodeidah. As their campaign progresses, they have secured densely populated areas, effectively governing about 65% of the total Yemen population. While these regions are less prone to ground fighting due to the Houthi stronghold, they are subject to intense airstrikes from GCC forces. Clashes between Houthi forces and resistance fighters occur within primarily Houthi-controlled economic centers in the south but are limited.

Active ground combat between government troops and Houthi militias is mainly confined to the outskirts of Houthi enclaves as both sides vie for control. These areas experience frequent shifts in control and suffer from volatile social conditions marked by disruptions in public services. Front-line governorates such as Taiz and Al Bayda remain accessible but pose significant mobility challenges and safety concerns.

Over recent years, Yemen has remained divided between the expanding Houthi movement from the north and the anti-Houthi coalition led by ousted President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi with Western and GCC support. The Houthis' actions were motivated by

perceived marginalization under previous governments and dissatisfaction with post-unification transition arrangements; they sought greater autonomy through seizing power.

The Houthi movement currently exercises control over around 40% of Yemen's territory, with a strong presence within the north, especially in Sa'adah and major economic centers like Sana'a's Ibb, and Al-Hodeidah. As their campaign advances, they have secured densely populated zones, successfully governing about 65% of the full Yemen population. While these regions are less prone to ground fighting due to the Houthi stronghold, they are subject to intense airstrikes from GCC forces.

Active ground combat between government troops and Houthi militias is mainly confined to the outskirts of Houthi enclaves as both sides vie for control. These areas experience frequent shifts in control and suffer from volatile social conditions marked by disruptions in public services. Front-line governorates such as Taiz and Al Bayda stay open but endure critical mobility challenges and security concerns.

Over recent years, Yemen has remained isolated between the extending Houthi development from the north and the anti-Houthi amalgamation driven by removed President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi with Western and GCC backing. The Houthis' activities were persuaded by seen marginalization during past governments and disappointment with post-unification courses of action; they looked for more noteworthy independence through seizing power.

Former President Ali Abdullah Saleh initially opposed the Houthis but later formed a pragmatic alliance with them to regain political influence. This alliance leveraged his loyalist forces to bolster their northern stronghold while he capitalized on their momentum against President Hadi's government. Meanwhile, President Hadi's political base is fragmenting as southern leaders grow disillusioned with instability despite receiving patronage within his administration. Many southern militias have been supported by UAE funding aimed at countering extremist groups but now increasingly advocate for secession amidst renewed demonstrations calling for independence from both Houthis and central government rule. The resurgence of southern separatism significantly complicates conflict dynamics in Yemen's south, making it challenging for any proposed political solution to gain traction across diverse parties or resonate at local levels (Maktary, S., & Smith, K. (2017).

As explained by Robinson (2023), several factors contributed to the escalation of political divisions in Yemen, ultimately leading to full-scale military conflict. One pivotal event was the removal of fuel subsidies by President Hadi's government in 2014, a move prompted by conditions tied to a \$550 million loan from the International Monetary Fund. This decision sparked widespread protests led by the Houthi movement, which had gained

broad support for its critiques of the UN-backed transition process. The Houthis demanded lower fuel prices and called for a new government, while supporters of Hadi and the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated al-Islah party organized counter-demonstrations.

Former president Ali Abdullah Saleh at first refuted the Houthis but afterward formed a practical union with them to recover political impact. This alliance utilized his loyalist forces to support their northern stronghold though he capitalized on their momentum against President Hadi's government. In the meantime, President Hadi's political base is dividing as southern leaders become frustrated with precariousness in spite of accepting support inside his administration. Numerous southern militias have been backed by UAE subsidizing focused at countering radical groups but now progressively advocate for secession in the midst of renewed demonstrations calling for autonomy from both Houthis and central government rule. The resurgence of southern separatism altogether complicates conflict dynamics in Yemen's south, making it challenging for any proposed political arrangement to gain traction over different parties or resonate at local levels (Maktary, S., & Smith, K. (2017).

As stated by Robinson (2023), a few variables contributed to the acceleration of political divisions in Yemen, eventually driving to full-scale military conflict. One significant occasion was the expulsion of fuel appropriations by President Hadi's government in 2014, a move incited by conditions tied to a \$550 million credit from the Worldwide Financial Support. This choice started far reaching dissensions driven by the Houthi movement, which had picked up a wide support for its evaluations of the UN-backed action course. The Houthis requested lower fuel costs and called for a new government, whereas supporters of Hadi and the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated al-Islah party organized counter-demonstrations.

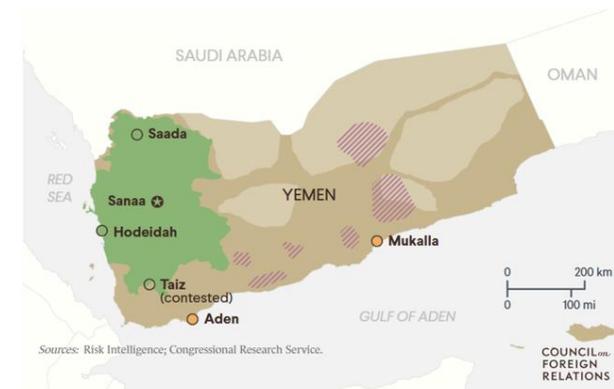


Figure 2. Yemen front lines: territorial control and influences as of January 2022. Council on Foreign Relations (2022).

The situation deteriorated further as the Houthis seized control of much of Sana'a by late 2014 and reneged on a UN peace agreement. They consolidated their hold on the capital and continued advancing southward, prompting Hadi's government to resign under pressure in January

2015. Hadi subsequently fled to Saudi Arabia. Military allegiances became increasingly divided as units loyal to former

President Saleh aligned with the Houthis, significantly bolstering their military successes. Conversely, other militias mobilized against these forces in support of those within the military who remained loyal to Hadi's administration. Meanwhile, southern separatists intensified their calls for independence. In response to these developments and with Hadi in exile, Saudi Arabia initiated a major military intervention in 2015 aimed at reversing Houthi gains and restoring Hadi's government to power through primarily aerial operations.

The relationship between Saudi Arabia and Iran is marked by ideological and territorial disputes that have significantly influenced regional dynamics. Both countries are predominantly Muslim, but they adhere to different interpretations of Islam—Saudi Arabia being a Sunni kingdom, maintains the selection of leaders through consensus or election and separates religious authority from political leadership, while Iran, a Shia republic, believes in the divine appointment of leaders from the Prophet's family (Ahlul Bayt), and integrates religious authority directly into governance. This sectarian divide has shaped their political agendas, alliances, and diplomatic relations; Saudi Arabia maintains strong ties with Western nations like the U.S., U.K., and France, while Iran has close relationships with Russia and China.

Following the Houthi takeover of Sana'a in 2015, as Houthi forces advanced towards Aden, Saudi Arabia launched a military campaign against them with support from Western allies. The Houthis are part of a Shia sect, which leads Saudi Arabia to view them as Iranian proxies receiving Iranian backing. This perception reinforces ties between the Houthis and Iran while exacerbating sectarian divisions within communities by aligning religious groups with broader conflict dynamics.

Although there is limited evidence confirming direct Iranian military support for the Houthis beyond political endorsement and media backing, Saudi officials believe that Iran exploits opportunities to counter its adversaries' interests through such proxy relationships. This belief further complicates regional tensions by entrenching sectarian alignments within the conflict's broader framework (Maktary, S., & Smith, K. (2017).

The situation deteriorated further as the Houthis seized control of much of Sana'a by late 2014 and reneged on a UN peace agreement. They solidified their hold on the capital and proceeded advancing southward, provoking Hadi's government to resign under pressure in January 2015. Hadi hence fled to Saudi Arabia. Military allegiances became progressively separated as units loyal to previous President Saleh made an alliance with the Houthis, essentially supporting their military victories. Alternatively, other militias mobilized against these forces in support of those inside the military who remained steadfast to Hadi's organization. In the interim, southern separatists heightened their calls for autonomy. As an

answer to these developments and with Hadi in banishment, Saudi Arabia started a major military intercession in 2015 focused at turning around Houthi gains and reestablishing Hadi's government to control through primarily aerial operations.

The relationship between Saudi Arabia and Iran is marked by ideological and regional disputes that have altogether impacted regional dynamics. Both nations are mainly Muslim, but they follow to different interpretations of Islam—Saudi Arabia being a Sunni kingdom, keeps up the election of leaders through agreement or vote and separates religious authority from political administration, whereas Iran, a Shia republic, accepts within the divine arrangement of leaders from the Prophet's family (Ahlul Bayt), and integrates devout authority specifically into administration. This sectarian divide has molded their political motivation, organizations together, and conciliatory relations; Saudi Arabia keeps up solid ties with Western countries just like the U.S., U.K., and France, whereas Iran has near connections with Russia and China.

Following the Houthi takeover of Sana'a in 2015, as Houthi powers progressed towards Aden, Saudi Arabia propelled a military campaign against them with bolster from Western partners. The Houthis are a portion of a Shia faction, which leads Saudi Arabia to see them as Iranian intermediaries getting Iranian backing. This recognition strengthens ties between the Houthis and Iran whereas worsening partisan divisions inside communities by adjusting devout groups.

Although there is limited evidence confirming direct Iranian military support for the Houthis beyond political endorsement and media backing, Saudi officials believe that Iran exploits opportunities to counter its adversaries' interests through such proxy relationships. This belief further complicates regional tensions by entrenching sectarian alignments within the conflict's broader framework (Maktary, S., & Smith, K. (2017).

As indicated by Robinson (2023), Yemen, long recognized as the poorest nation in the Arab world, is grappling with one of the most severe humanitarian crises globally. Approximately three-quarters of its population lives in poverty, and diseases such as cholera have spread extensively—exceeding 200,000 suspected cases by 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated this situation due to limited data availability and reduced international aid during its peak.

The ongoing conflict has led to significant displacement, with four million internally displaced persons according to UN reports. Moreover, a prolonged blockade by coalition forces has severely restricted essential supplies like food and medicine, contributing to inflated prices for vital goods. Although a temporary cease-fire in 2022 brought some relief

through reduced prices, concerns persist about renewed economic hardship following its expiration.

Estimates from the UN Development Program suggest that over 370,000 deaths have resulted from the war—nearly 60% of which are attributed to indirect causes such as shortages of food, water, and healthcare services. Additionally, both Houthi forces and coalition forces have been accused by the United Nations of violating international law through deliberate attacks on civilian targets. These violations include incidents like the destruction of a hospital operated by Doctors Without Borders in 2015 and other alleged war crimes such as torture and forced disappearances.

As indicated by Robinson (2023), Yemen, long recognized as the poorest country within the Middle easterner world, is grappling with one of the foremost extreme humanitarian crises globally. Roughly three-quarters of its population lives in poverty, and illnesses such as cholera have spread extensively—exceeding 200,000 suspected cases by 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated this circumstance due to restricted information accessibility and decreased universal help amid its crest.

The progressing conflict has driven to critical uprooting, with four million internally displaced people concurring to UN reports. In addition, a prolonged blockade by a coalition of forces has seriously limited fundamental supplies like nourishment and medication, contributing to expanded costs for vital goods. In spite of the fact that a transitory cease-fire in 2022 brought some relief through diminished costs, concerns persist about renewed economic hardships taking after its termination.

Estimates from the UN Advancement Program state that over 370,000 casualties have come about from the war—nearly 60% of which are credited to backhanded causes such as deficiencies of nourishment, water, and healthcare administrations. Furthermore, both Houthi forces and coalition forces have been blamed by the United Nations of violating international law through attacks on civilian targets. These infringement incorporate episodes just like the pulverization of a clinic worked by Doctors Without Borders in 2015 and other alleged war crimes such as torture and forced disappearances.

Key Points

- How has Yemen's past experience with colonial powers (e.g., Ottoman, British) influenced its current political and social landscape?
- What role have historical colonial legacies played in shaping contemporary conflicts?
- In what ways does contemporary colonialism affect social structures, including tribal authority and gender roles, in Yemen?
- To what extent does external influence (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Iran) contribute to political instability in Yemen?
- How do international alliances shape the conflict dynamics between different factions within Yemen?
- In what ways does the situation in Yemen affect regional stability across the Middle East?
- What obstacles hinder effective international cooperation aimed at resolving conflicts linked to colonial legacies in regions like Yemen?
- What strategies could be employed by international actors to address historical injustices while promoting stability and self-determination for countries like Yemen affected by neo colonial influences?

Guiding Questions

- What is your country's historical or current involvement with Yemen (e.g., military, economic, or political)?
- How have historical colonial powers (e.g., Ottoman, British) influenced Yemen's current political landscape?
- Does your country support any specific faction or group in Yemen? If so, why, and how does this align with your national interests?
- How do proxy wars involving Iran-backed Houthis versus a Saudi-led coalition reflect neocolonial dynamics?
- How has your country contributed to or been affected by the humanitarian crisis in Yemen?
- To what extent does foreign control over resources contribute to economic instability or inequality in Yemen?
- What implications does the situation in Yemen have for your country?

References

- BBC News. (2018, June 13). Yemen conflict explained in 400 words. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-44466574>
- BBC News. (2024, February 13). Yemen country profile. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14704852>
- Conflict in Yemen and the Red Sea. Global Conflict Tracker. (n.d.). Global Conflict Tracker. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/war-yemen>
- Jazeera, A. (2020, April 26). Timeline: History of separatism in southern Yemen. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/4/26/timeline-history-of-separatism-in-southern-yemen>
- Pukhovaia, E. (2023). Sayyids, Tribal Kinship, and the Imamate in Zaydi Yemen under Imam Yaḥyā Sharaf al-Dīn . *Medieval Encounters*, 29(5–6), 442–463. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700674-12340173>
- Redaction. (2015, January 23). Quiénes son los hutíes, el grupo rebelde que derrocó a un gobierno a las puertas de Arabia Saudita. BBC News Mundo. https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias/2015/01/150122_internacional_yemen_huties_msds
- Redaction. (2024, January 12). Yemen: quiénes son los rebeldes hutíes y por qué EE.UU. y Reino Unido lanzaron un ataque contra ellos. BBC News Mundo. <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/articles/cll7zv3ne9po>
- Robinson, K. (2023, May 1). Yemen’s Tragedy: war, stalemate, and suffering. Council on Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/background/yemen-crisis>
- The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2024, January 17). Yemeni Civil War MAP, Houthi, Saudi Arabia, & Israel. Encyclopedia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Yemeni-Civil-War>
- THE HOUTHIS | Security Council. (2022, February 28). <https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/houthis-0>
- UNICEF. (2024, December 30). Yemen crisis. <https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/yemen-crisis>
- Unfoundation.org. (n.d.). Yemen: A Brief background. <https://unfoundation.org/what-we-do/issues/peace-human-rights-and-humanitarian-response/yemen-a-brief-background/#:~:text=1918%3A%20Shia%20imams%20declare%20a,establishes%20the%20Yemen%20Arab%20Republic.>
- Washington, A. C., DC. (2024, April 8). A Timeline of the Yemen Crisis, from the 1990s to the Present. Arab Center Washington DC. <https://arabcenterdc.org/resource/a-timeline-of-the-yemen-crisis-from-the-1990s-to-the-present/>

Topic 2: Independent political movement and disputes in the Caucasus region

Historical Context

The Caucasus region, located between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, is a geographical and cultural bridge that connects both Europe and Asia. A strategic location due to their military and economic significance, that has made it a focal point of geopolitical tensions throughout history. This region surrounds four main countries, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia and Georgia, each fostering diverse cultures, languages and traditions, shaped by centuries of influence from severe empires.

The Caucasus region is often divided in two parts, the north Caucasus, which is mainly part of the Russian Federation, and the south Caucasus, which mostly surrounds the

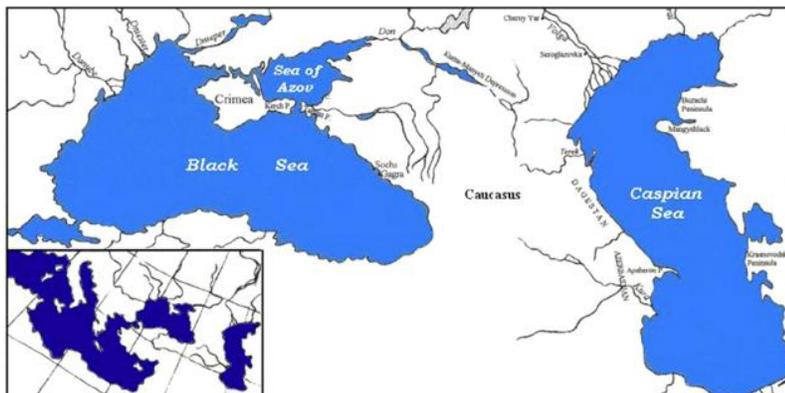


Figure 1 Caucasus map

independent regions of Armenia Azerbaijan and Georgia. Each of the countries mentioned possesses unique political dynamics and cultural identities, however they all share historical experiences of conflict, conquest and resistance. According to the historian Charles King in his book *The Ghost of Freedom*, “The Caucasus has been a

battleground for great empires for centuries, each leaving an imprint on its languages, religions, and governance structures” (King, *The Ghost of Freedom*, 2008)

As King specifically mentioned, historically, the Caucasus has been influenced by a regime change of powerful empires, like the Persian Empire, the Ottoman Empire, and the Russian Empire, each fueling the region’s complex religious and ethnic mixture. The Persian

empire exerted control mostly all over the south part for centuries, spreading different religions like Zoroastrianism, which believes that there is a profound dichotomy between good and evil, and later the Islam was introduced. Simultaneously, the Ottoman empire exerted its influence mostly in the western Caucasus, spreading Sunni Islam, which believed that the Quran is the literal word of God, and they also established trade networks.

The Russian Empire initiated its expansion towards the south part of the Caucasus between the 18th and 19th centuries, which drastically led to a severe variation of wars and conquests, such as the Russo-Persian Wars from 1804 to 1828 and the Russo-Turkish wars,



Figure 2 Turkish troops headed to the Caucasus front

which culminated in Russian dominance over an important part of the region. This expansion was escorted by policies aimed at consolidating Russian control, including Russification, which is a process that pursued to assimilate local populations by promoting the Russian language, culture and orthodox Christianity, while minimizing native traditions and languages. During the 19th century, Russia integrated Georgia

and later Armenia and Azerbaijan following the past mentioned conflicts that Russia faced. Russian dominance was frequently challenged by fierce resistance, especially in the North Caucasus, where the Caucasian War took place between 1817 and 1864, the Russian Empire aimed to conquer the indigenous people of the North Caucasus, the Chechens, Circassians and Dagestanis. The war was mostly characterized by intense armed group resistance, particularly under the leadership of Imam Shamil, an Avar military and religious leader, who united various ethnic groups in the fight against Russia expansion, in response, the Russian military employed harsh tactics like mass deportation and village destruction. The war ended in 1864, with the Circassian's defeat, which resulted in a massive, forced migration with hundreds of thousands expelled to the Ottoman Empire. For many, this exile represented extreme difficulty, as displaced communities were subjected to forced conversion to Islam to align with the Ottoman religious policies. According to the historian Moshe Gammer, "The resistance of north Caucasian peoples was one of the longest-lasting anti-colonial struggles in modern history." (Gammer, Muslim Resistance to the Tsar, 1994)

In the 20th century, the Soviet Union merged the Caucasus into its socialist's republics, forming the Georgian SSR, Armenian SSR and Azerbaijani SSR. The Soviet Union,

a multiethnic state governed centrally from Moscow, was characterized by the dominance of Russia within its administrative structures. Geopolitical tensions, rivalries between states or empires over strategic influence and territory, shaped Soviet policies in the Caucasus, as the region was a crucial territory between the USSR and its neighbors. The Soviet period saw extensive industrialization, with mining operations, the development of factories and energy infrastructure that formed the region's economy. The expansion of rail and road networks connected previously remote regions to major Soviet Urban centers, facilitating both trade and migration. Simultaneous improvements in education and healthcare systems contributed to increased literacy rates and a greater degree of urbanization.

However, Soviet rule also imposed strict ideological control, exerting nationalist's movements and religious expression in favor of Soviet identity, continuing to mold the region's ethnic composition through the interaction of migration, state policies, and historical movements. One of the most devastating situations of this occurred under Joseph Stalin's rule, which was the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee, under his command, particularly, during the great purge and World War II, when ethnic groups were targeted, in 1944, Stalin ordered the mass deportation of the Chechens and Ingush, as mentioned earlier, local indigenous groups from the Caucasus, to



Figure 1 More than half a million Ingush and Chechens were deported to Central Asia by Soviet authorities in 1944.

Central Asia, accusing them of collaborating with the Nazi Germany. Over 500.000 people were forced to displace, with thousands confronting a broad diversity of diseases and starvation, due to the harsh conditions they were obliged to relocate with (Conquest, The Nation Killers: The Soviet Deportation Nationalities, 1970). According to

historian Norman Naimark, the deportations were also a way of ethnic cleansing aimed at erasing entire national identities from their homelands (Fires or Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth Century Europe, 2001). These deportations clearly affected the demographic and cultural landscape of the north Caucasus, as a lot of communities were only allowed to return decades later, after Stalin's death in 1953.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Armenia suffered from an economic obstruction imposed by Azerbaijan and Turkey due to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, leading to severe energy insufficiencies and economic difficulties (De Waal, *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan Through Peace and War*, 2003). Georgia fell into civil conflicts in the early 90s, with internal issues in regions like Abkhazia and south Ossetia, culminating in a long-lasting instability and displacement of thousands (Jones, *Georgia: A Political History Since Independence*, 2013). Azerbaijan, on the other hand, employed its rich oil resources, leading to an economic growth fueled by foreign investment in the energy sector, especially in the Caspian Sea (Guliyev, *Oil and Politics in the Caucasus: The legacy of "Black Gold"*, 2013). These conflicts caused significant losses and widespread displacement, leaving perduring tensions that continue to fuel regional instability and shape the contemporary geopolitical landscape of the Caucasus.

Looking forward, the Caucasus faces ongoing challenges, including persistent Russian influence, economic struggles, and the possibility of reconciliation. Moscow maintains political and military influence, notably within the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, therefore restricting Georgia's full sovereignty and complicating regional diplomatic efforts. Georgia and Armenia face persistent economic challenges, aiming to diversify their economies to reduce dependence on remittances and foreign support. Azerbaijan, similarly, confronts the challenge of unpredictable oil prices while recognizing the necessity of economic diversification. While all these obstacles persist significantly, there is reason to be optimistic about reconciliation, thanks to diplomatic initiatives and regional cooperation. Despite these positive developments, territorial disputes and persistent ethnic tensions continue to slow down the process of achieving lasting peace and stability.

	Description	Examples
Location	Geographical Position	Between the Black Sea and Caspian Sea
Countries Involved	Main Countries in Region	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia (South Caucasus), Russia (North Caucasus)
Historical Influences	Empires That Shaped Region	Persian Empire (Zoroastrianism & Islam), Ottoman Empire (Sunni Islam), Russian Empire (Orthodox Christianity)
Modern Conflicts	Ongoing Disputes/Tensions	Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict, Abkhazia-South Ossetia Disputes within Georgia
Economic Developments	Post-Soviet Economic Challenges & Opportunities	Infrastructure Projects Enhancing Regional Connectivity

Current Situation

Conflicts have always emerged when distinctive groups have formed throughout human history. Some of these disputes remain localized and can be settled agreeably, whereas others rapidly rise into rough quarrels that can take the frame of both brief clashes and extended battles. Ethnic pressures and separatist movements are far reaching all through the world, affecting indeed affluent countries. Strikingly, there were 39 notable cases of genocide or politicide between 1955 and 2002, highlighting how repetitive these clashes are over the world. A captivating case for analyzing ethnic viciousness and severance is the Caucasus region. This diversity has driven to the development of full-scale ethnic clashes on a few occasions, whereas other regions keep up moderately serene connections. Moreover, the Caucasus has gotten to be progressively related with Islamic developments, and its geological nearness to regions encountering savage clashes including Muslim population increases its potential for instability (Harf B., 2005).

The Caucasus region is situated between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, including Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia, in spite of the fact that topographically it may moreover incorporate parts of Russia, Turkey, and Iran. The Caucasus Mountains, marking the merging of Europe and Asia, separate the North Caucasus—part of Russia—from the

South Caucasus, which comprises the three independent states of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. Historically, Russia referred to the South Caucasus as Transcaucasia (Zakavkáz'je in Russian), meaning "beyond the Caucasus Mountains." The Greater Caucasus watershed is traditionally regarded as the boundary between Europe and Asia. As a result, some scholars classify the western portion of the region as European and the eastern portion—including most of Azerbaijan as well as parts of Armenia, Georgia, and Russia's Caspian coastline—as Asian. Alternatively, other interpretations use the Aras River along Turkey's border as the continental divide, placing Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia within Europe (Neset et al., 2023).



Figure 1. The Caucasus map. Britannica (2025).

According to Seeker S. (1997) the disintegration of the Soviet Union in December 1991 was stamped by noteworthy political turmoil and military clashes inside a few of its constituent republics. The Caucasus and

Black Sea regions, in specific, experienced a heightened level of political insecurity and equipped strife. Eminently, these regions had a history of conflict dating back to the early years of the Soviet Union, which incomprehensibly finished in increased pressures amid the period of its disintegration. This legacy of conflict underscores the complex and persevering nature of regional instability in these areas. Moreover, differences between Russia's military and civilian authority over the administration of ethnic conflicts—both inside the previous republics and interior of the Russian Federation itself, such as in Chechnya—have contributed to the prolongation and acceleration of these disputes. The sustainability of the later peace agreement between Russia and the Chechens, brokered by General Alexander Lebed, is essentially impacted by progressing power dynamics inside Moscow.

The newly independent states of the post-Soviet period have explored the move absent from the Soviet rule in assorted ways, driving to changing degrees of conflict. Numerous early post-Soviet leaders within the Caucasus rejected the Soviet political bequest and looked to set up modern control structures and institutions. Be that as it may, these endeavors to destroy the past political arrangement regularly incited savage clashes, uprisings, and, in a few occurrences, civil wars. Indeed in cases where large-scale violence was maintained a strategic distance from, variables such as ethnic divisions, devout differences, financial challenges, environmental concerns, and external influences have contributed to continuous instability within the region.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Caucasus region has confronted critical financial underdevelopment, with conditions further deteriorating in recent years. For instance, child mortality rates are three times higher than in Western Europe, and male life expectancy declined from 63.8 years in 1990 to 59 years in 2000, and further to 55.5 years by 2002. At first, unemployment was not a broad issue after the Soviet Union's disintegration; be that as it may, it became a major concern as savage clashes heightened. In Georgia, the national GDP in 1995 was 17% of its 1989 level, and by 2001, about one million workers—predominantly college graduates—had emigrated.

Compounding these financial challenges, Russia and Georgia have sought after divergent policies since the Soviet Union's fall, frequently acting in restriction to one another and worsening territorial insecurity. Mikhail Gorbachev's arrangement of empowering patriotism cultivated solid Georgian desires for autonomy but at the same time heightens pressures with minority groups such as the Ossetians and Abkhazians. In 2008, after its attack on Georgia, Russia pulled back troops but pronounced its recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia freedom as "irreversible." At the same time, Russia has kept up a firm position that all republics under its control must stay a portion of the Russian state.

Cross-border conflicts have also persisted. For example, in the early 2000s, North Ossetia resettled South Ossetian refugees in disputed areas despite protests from the Ingush population and denied Ingush petitions to return to their homes. These entrenched conflicts make the Caucasus region a valuable case study for examining ethnic and religious tensions as well as the underlying factors contributing to such disputes (Margaritis C., 2010).

Regarding cross border conflicts, the origins of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict predate the collapse of the Soviet Union, reflecting longstanding tensions between Armenians and Azerbaijanis throughout much of the 20th century. Historically the majority population in Nagorno-Karabakh has been ethnic Armenians. They have looked for self-determination and autonomy from Azerbaijan, driving to the foundation of the unrecognized Republic of Artsakh (once known as the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic). This entity worked with its own government and political parties, such as the Free Motherland Party and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation. On the other hand, earlier to the conflict, there was a significant Azerbaijani population in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. Be that as it may, numerous were uprooted amid the First Nagorno-Karabakh War (1988–1994) when Armenian forces gained control of the region. This historical backdrop of mutual suspicion and competing historical interpretations contributed significantly to the complex ethnic and territorial disputes that have characterized the region. The problem of Nagorno-Karabakh is arguably the most acute issue in the Caucasus today. The outbreak of fighting in April 2016 is the worst since the 1994 ceasefire. Over the past five years, Armenia and Azerbaijan have significantly militarized their border regions and amassed substantial military capabilities. In the event of a major conflict, the conflict could assume a regional character, potentially involving Russia and Turkey. Additionally, Georgia might be drawn into the conflict due to the presence of sizable Armenian and Azerbaijani minority populations within its borders, which could exacerbate regional instability. (Melvin & Klimenko, 2016).

As stated in a Council on Foreign Relations report (2024) in response to the prospect of Azerbaijani governance, over 100,000 individuals, comprising nearly the entire population of Nagorno-Karabakh, fled to Armenia within a week. Baku has outlined plans to reintegrate the region and its remaining inhabitants into Azerbaijan, promising economic development as part of this process. Current endeavors are centered on normalizing relations and securing a peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The conflict escalated significantly in late September 2020, following a summer of cross-border assaults, coming about within the passings of more than 7,000 officers and civilians, with hundreds more injured. Initially, both countries stood up to international pressure from the United Nations, the United States, and Russia to take part in talks and consequently agree to a cease fire, but contrary to what was advised the nations instead proceeded with the conflict.

The escalation of tensions inside the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was marked by a shift from cross-border shelling to the deployment of longer-range gunnery and heavy weaponry. In contempt of several failed attempts by Russia, France, and the United States to orchestrate a ceasefire, Russia successfully interceded a peace agreement on November 9, 2020. This agreement, strengthened by the deployment of Russian peacekeepers, brought a conclusion to the six-week Second Nagorno-Karabakh War. As a result, Azerbaijan recaptured most of the domain it had lost over two decades earlier, leaving Armenia with control over only a portion of Karabakh. The agreement also established the Lachin corridor, a vital strip of land monitored by Russian peacekeepers, which serves as a crucial travel course interfacing Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh. Efforts at negotiation and intercession, basically initiated by the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), have hence far been unsuccessful in accomplishing a lasting resolution to the conflict. In spite of progressing attempts to encourage a peaceful settlement, the Minsk Group's activities have not yielded a durable solution, underscoring the complexity and unmanageability of the dispute. Both Armenia and Azerbaijan exchanged allegations with respect to the initiation of violence. In spite of its preoccupation with the conflict in Ukraine, Russia claimed to have mediated a truce between the parties. However, additional border clashes happened rapidly after the Russian-brokered agreement.



Figure 2. Refugees from the Nagorno-Karabakh region drive cars past a checkpoint in the village of Kornidzor, Armenia. Council on Foreign Relations (2023).

In December 2022, Azerbaijani activists, reportedly supported by the state, occupied the Lachin Passage, apparently dissenting about environmental issues related to mining in Nagorno-Karabakh. This blockade severely limited access to the region, driving to acute shortages and rationing for its inhabitants. The Russian peacekeeping forces, entrusted with maintaining the corridor's openness, were incapable or unwilling to mediate successfully, eroding trust in Russia's part as a security guarantor.

The fragile ceasefire set up in 2020 was more than once breached, culminating in a critical two-day conflict on September 13, 2022—the most considerable escalation since the past year.



Figure 3. Azerbaijani service members drive an armored personnel carrier in Hadrut town in the region of Nagorno-Karabakh. Council on Foreign Relations (2020).

of medical evacuations. In spite of Azerbaijan's offer of aid, the region's leaders refused it, citing the country's part in making the crisis.

Azerbaijan further limited access to Nagorno-Karabakh by setting up checkpoints and prohibiting Red Cross convoys, worsening the humanitarian crisis. The situation worsened with the detainment of people attempting to cross for medical care, leading to a suspension

On September 19, 2023, Azerbaijan initiated a major military operation in Nagorno-Karabakh, formally announced as an "anti-terrorist" endeavor aimed at neutralizing Armenian military establishments. The operation brought around critical casualties and Azerbaijan's claim of full control over the region. Resulting Russia-mediated exchange centered on the demobilization of Armenian separatists and the reintegration of Nagorno-Karabakh into Azerbaijan. Dissents in Yerevan, Armenia, criticized the government's taking care of the circumstance, asking security for ethnic Armenians and the renunciation of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. The status of around 100,000 ethnic Armenians within the disputed terrain remains dubious, with numerous escaping to Armenia and others looking for security before considering demilitarization.

Since gaining independence, Georgia has faced multiple internal ethnic conflicts. The rise of resistance movements among the Acara, Ossetian, and Abkhazian minorities can be attributed to the zealous Georgian nationalist discourse promoted by the Gamsakhurdia

administration in the early 1990s. Whereas Acara was able to discover a way forward, the contrasting geological circumstances of Abkhazia and South Ossetia offer assistance to clarify Abkhazia's plunge into civil war with the central government. Acara's nearness to Turkey, which did not bolster its severance, contrasts with Abkhazia and South Ossetia's area along the Russian border, where Russia has reliably looked for openings for mediation. The Georgia-Russia War in August 2008 essentially affected territorial geopolitics, highlighting the degree to which Russia would go to protect its seen interface within the region and the failure of other performing actors to avoid it. The U.S. withdrawal from the zone, after a period of developing military and security interfaces after the 9/11 assaults, also played a part. Essentially, the European Union's inner challenges and declining interest within the region after securing access to its vitality assets contributed to the expanded impact of the Russian Federation, which has reinforced its relations with Azerbaijan and extended its impact over Armenia. Expanding the panorama, according to Hunter S. analysis, western policies have altogether impacted the political dynamics of the Black Sea region and the Caucasus. The advancement of these approaches can be divided into three particular stages. At first, from 1988 to 1991, Western arrangement was cautious, pointing to bolster Soviet changes and maintain a strategic distance from compounding pressures. This led to a quieted reaction to patriot developments in Georgia and Azerbaijan, as the West looked to preserve steadiness inside the Soviet Union.

During the second stage, from 1992 to 1994, Western policy was more Russo-centric, permitting Russia considerable impact within the region. Be that as it may, Azerbaijan was an exemption, where the West effectively advanced Turkish association. This period too saw endeavors to contain and separate Iran, whereas lifting Turkey's leadership role, which introduced contradictions in Western policy.

Within the third stage, from 1994 onwards, Western policy became less centered on Russia and more proactive towards previous Soviet republics. In spite of this move in its course of action, the desire to maintain a strategic distance from antagonizing Russia and undermining pro-Western forces inside it has restricted Western intercession in regional conflicts, such as in Chechnya. This cautious approach reflects the complex balance of interests and the need to explore different geopolitical priorities in the region.

Key Points

- The Caucasus region's long history of separatist movements, with various ethnic groups seeking independence or greater autonomy.
- Movements such as the Confederation of Peoples of the Caucasus.
- Groups like the Dagestan National Centre and the Ingush Independence Committee (Galgay Komitet) advocating for independence or territorial sovereignty.
- External factors such as Russian involvement and Western policies impact on the dynamics of separatist movements in the Caucasus.
- Western policies ambiguity by balancing support for regional stability with concerns about antagonizing Russia.
- Economic challenges and cultural preservation efforts underpinning separatist sentiments, as seen in regions like Dagestan and Ingushetia.
- The role of social media in mobilizing support for separatist movements.
- The balance between internal demands for autonomy and external geopolitical pressures and its likelihood to continue to shape the political landscape of the Caucasus.

Guiding Questions

- Does your country have historical, cultural, or political ties to any of the Caucasus states or de facto entities (e.g., Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh)?
- What historical events have shaped the emergence of separatist movements in the Caucasus?
- How does your country view independence movements in the region—do you support or oppose them? Why?
- Does your country have economic or strategic interests (e.g., energy pipelines, trade routes) in the Caucasus that are affected by these disputes?
- How have past conflicts influenced current political dynamics in the region?
- Which are the most prominent separatist movements in the Caucasus today?
- What is your country's position on Russia's role in managing or exacerbating conflicts in the Caucasus?
- How do external actors like Russia, Turkey, and Western countries influence separatist movements in the Caucasus?
- What are the key factors contributing to ongoing conflicts in regions like Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh?
- How does your country view and respond to separatist movements in the Caucasus?

- What implications does this have for regional stability and global security?
- What socioeconomic challenges contribute to the rise of separatist sentiments in the Caucasus?
- How do cultural preservation efforts and economic disparities influence these movements?
- What policy options are available to address separatist movements in the Caucasus?
- How can international actors balance support for regional stability with respect for self-determination rights?

References

- Akkiewa, S. (2008). The Caucasus: One or many? A view from the region. Nationalities Papers. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/nationalities-papers/article/abs/caucasus-one-or-many-a-view-from-the-region/4C1C1C8A4790F424760AEB83D6B973D0>
- De Waal, T. (2018). The Caucasus: An introduction. Oxford University Press. https://books.google.es/books?hl=es&lr=&id=8dp1DwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=history+of+the+caucasus+region+&ots=B0KSx3mRWw&sig=yBHhFAGbu6Ym0imLYj_zDBFvDqA#v=onepage&q=history%20of%20the%20caucasus%20region&f=false
- Harff, B. (2005). Assessing Risks of Genocide and Politicide. http://www.genocide-watch.com/images/AboutGen_Assessing_Risks_of_Genocide_and_Politicide.pdf
- Hunter, S. (1997). Conflict in the Caucasus and the black Sea Region: Causes and prospects for Resolution. <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/23280/Conflict%20in%20the%20Caucasus%20and%20the%20Black%20Sea%20Region.pdf>
- King, C. (2008). The ghost of freedom: A history of the Caucasus. Oxford University Press. https://books.google.es/books?hl=es&lr=&id=m2A_W46eQhsC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=historical+context+caucasus+region+&ots=tars06V4oR&sig=8z3bUHX27_JzFHH2srT1H7fNlXM#v=onepage&q=historical%20context%20caucasus%20region&f=false
- Margaritis, Connie (2010) "Conflict in the Caucasus," Res Publica - Journal of Undergraduate Research: Vol. 15 Available at: <https://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/respublica/vol15/iss1/10>
- Marshall, A. (2010). The Caucasus under Soviet rule. Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9780203847008/caucasus-soviet-rule-alex-marshall>

- Melvin, N., & Klimenko, E. (2016, June 1), Shifting conflict and security dynamics in the Caucasus: The role of regional powers. SIPRI. <https://www.sipri.org/commentary/blog/2016/shifting-conflict-and-security-dynamics-caucasus-role-regional-powers>
- Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict | Global Conflict Tracker. (n.d.). Global Conflict Tracker. <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/nagorno-karabakh-conflict>
- Neset, S., Aydin, M., Ergun, A., Giragosian, R., Kakachia, K., & Strand, A. (2023). Changing Geopolitics of the South Caucasus after the Second Karabakh War. Prospect for Regional Cooperation and/or Rivalry. CMI - Chr. Michelsen Institute. <https://www.cmi.no/publications/8911-changing-geopolitics-of-the-south-caucasus-after-the-second-karabakh-war>
- Vash, V. R. (2014). The Caucasus, its peoples, and its history. Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences. <https://www.indianjournals.com/ijor.aspx?target=ijor:rjhss&volume=5&issue=4&article=014>
- Ware, R. B. (1998). *Conflict in the Caucasus: An historical context and a prospect for peace.* Central Asian Survey. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/02634939808401040>

How to Make a Good Argument?

A good argument should not only be clear and structured but also convincing and based on evidence. In the context of debate and negotiation, each point presented must be solid, coherent, and relevant to the discussion. Below are the key elements for constructing an effective argument:

- **Clarity and precision**

State your point directly and without ambiguity.

- **Use of evidence**

Support your argument with data, reliable sources, or concrete examples.

- **Logical coherence**

Ensure that the premises lead to a valid conclusion.

- **Refutation of counterarguments**

Anticipate possible objections and respond to them effectively.

- **Formal and diplomatic language**

Avoid value judgments and use a professional tone.

- **Relevance**

Focus on key points related to the topic under discussion.

- **Impact and practical application**

Explain how your argument affects the current situation or future decisions.

- **Logical structure**

Organize your argument with an introduction, development, and conclusion.

- **Persuasion and appeal to common interest**

Frame your argument within shared values for greater impact.

Recommendations from the Presidents

- Don't be afraid to use the placard—it is your greatest ally during the debate. Whenever you have ideas, speak as many times as possible, making quality interventions so that all delegations take you into account.
- Remember that the length of an intervention or portfolio does not determine its quality. You can express as much as you want, but always keep in mind: quality is better than quantity.
- Use the room space to make yourself noticed by delegates and chairs.
- Maintain eye contact to demonstrate confidence in the topic.
- We recommend keeping a notebook handy to write down key points from previous interventions and to outline your own points before speaking.
- Build on previous interventions and follow the flow of the debate.
- Make your interventions more dynamic by using the board, images, projectors, videos, etc.
- Use an appropriate tone of voice. You don't need to shout, but ensure your voice reaches everyone clearly.
- Use proper parliamentary language.
- Avoid relying too much on electronic devices—having prepared information is always beneficial.
- Use reliable sources to support both your interventions and your portfolio.
- Ensure your portfolio contains enough information to help you deeply understand the topic and your country's stance. Any portfolio containing plagiarism will not be considered.
- Provide context, not only from your country's perspective but also by researching the global implications of the issue and how it affects other nations.
- Give your best during the conference days—we are confident that you can do it.
- Remember that any form of plagiarism or improper use of artificial intelligence (such as ChatGPT or similar tools) is strictly prohibited and will be penalized.