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EKIN SNY MUN BACKGROUND GUIDE

Committee: United Nations
Security Council

Topic: The Rwandan Genocide



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Table of contents

Welcome Speech/Letter from the Chairboard (NEW YORK)	1
Welcome Speech/Letter from the Chairboard (IZMIR)	2
Committee Overview	3
Background	4
The Genocide	6
Past International Action	7
Recommendations for Creating a Resolution	8
Questions to Consider	9
For Further Research	10



Welcome Speech/Letter from the Chairboard (NEW YORK)

Hello! My name is Aurora Strøm Ruud, and I will be one of your chairs for the Historical Security Council at this conference. I am from Norway, but I moved to New York City in 2020 to study International Relations and Diplomacy, and stayed in the city to pursue a masters degree in Human Rights at Columbia University. I have been active in MUN, both as a delegate and as a chair, for many years. I am particularly excited to be in the Historical Security Council this year, as in 2017 at my first international conference I was a delegate in the Historical Security Council myself, and it gave me a new understanding of historical issues that I would not otherwise have gotten. This council gives us a unique opportunity to discuss solutions, have debates, and think of solutions to issues we otherwise only learn about in history class. It is also a great way to understand how relevant history is for the present. I am excited to be a part of this committee and to help facilitate negotiations, debate, and resolutions on such an important historical issue.

Welcome to the Historical Security Council!



Welcome Speech/Letter from the Chairboard (IZMIR)

Hello diplomats! My name is Rawan Hijazi, and I will be serving as your Chair for the Historical UNSC Committee. I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Economics, and I am currently part of a Big 4, continuing my path in the corporate world. I have been a MUN trainer for 8 years for multiple regions in the Middle East, Europe, and the United States. Wishing you all a fruitful conference!

- Hello, everyone! My name is Aidan Ward. I am an undergraduate student studying International Relations and Economics, with a focus on US-China foreign policy. This is my second time co-chairing a Model UN conference, and I look forward to meeting everyone!
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Committee Overview

Established in 1945, The United Nations Security Council is one of the UN's principal organs, with the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. The Security Council is empowered to take decisive and binding action on matters of global conflict and crisis. Composed of 15 members, the Council includes five permanent members, China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, who hold veto power, and ten non-permanent members elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms.



UNSC

Decisions require at least nine affirmative votes, including the agreement of all five permanent members on substantive matters. The Security Council's mandate is both broad and powerful, ranging from conflict prevention and peace enforcement to post-conflict reconstruction and atrocity prevention. Under the UN Charter, the Security Council has the authority to determine threats to peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression, and to take measures to address these situations. The Historical Security Council will be set in 1995. Delegates should research developments related to the issue before this date and assume they are within this timeline when coming up with possible solutions.



Background

Rwanda has a long history, and because of its established dynamics in the pre-colonial era, Rwanda differs from most other sub-Saharan countries because its general boundaries were created by the established nation-state that existed before the colonial era, not by European colonial powers. Before colonization, Rwanda was a centralized monarchy led by Tusi kings who ruled through cattle chiefs, land chiefs, and military chiefs. Hutu-Tusi relations were carried out through a client-patron contract that allowed the Hutu to use the Tusi cattle in exchange for personal and military service, indenturing the Hutu to the Tusi chiefs. From 1894 to 1916, Rwanda was a part of German East Africa. In 1918, under the mandates system of the League of Nations, Belgium became the administering authority. During this time, Rwanda and Burundi were administered together as the territory of Ruanda-Urundi. Before independence, Rwanda was a monarchy largely ruled by Tutsi kings, a structure that German and Belgian colonial authorities adapted to their advantage.

Initially, Belgian governance bolstered Tutsi authority, implementing racialized policies such as requiring Hutu to carry identity cards, thus formalizing these ethnic categories, and facilitating Tutsi dominance in administrative roles. Eventually, this ethnic stratification culminated in the 1959 Revolution, which effectively ended the Tutsi monarchy and propelled Hutu leaders to power. By the early 1960s, Rwanda had undergone a drastic shift from Tutsi-dominated hierarchy to a Hutu-majority government, sparking waves of ethnic violence, forced displacements, and enduring social divides.



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The Genocide

The Rwandan Genocide unfolded over a period of 100 days from April to July 1994, during which an estimated 800,000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu were systematically killed by extremist Hutu militias and radicalized citizens, often with the complicity of government forces. Additionally, an estimated 150,000-250,000 women were raped, 300,000 children murdered, and 95,000 children left orphaned by the violence.

The catalyst for the genocide was the premeditated assassination of Hutu President Juvénal Habyarimana on April 6, 1994. While the exact perpetrators of the assassination remain unknown, it was used as a pretext by Hutu extremists to initiate the coordinated campaign of mass extermination.

The genocide was marked by widespread atrocities, including house-to-house killings, the use of machetes and firearms, sexual violence targeting Tutsi women and girls, and the destruction of property. In many instances, militia forces coerced ordinary citizens to participate in the violence. During this violence, the international community largely failed to intervene, with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) seeing a reduction in capacity over the genocide. The RPF, under the leadership of Paul Kagame, eventually defeated the Hutu regime, ending the genocide and taking control of the country in July 1994.



Past International Action

In 1993, the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandan Patriotic Front signed the Arusha Accords to end the Rwandan Civil War. Before the genocide in 1994, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) was established by Security Council resolution 872 (1993) to help implement the Arusha Peace Agreement. UNAMIR's mandate includes peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, and general support for the peace process. UNSC Resolution 893 constituted the deployment of UNAMIR as well as the implementation of the Arusha Accords. In the years between 1994-1996, the UN Security Council passed numerous resolutions addressing the situation in Rwanda, several of which extended and adjusted the mandate of UNAMIR. Additionally, the Security Council attempted to address the situation in Rwanda as it unfolded through more than 15 Security Council Resolutions.

Resolution 918 (1994) imposed an arms embargo on Rwanda; this embargo was lifted by Resolution 1011 (1995). In December 1995, Resolution 1029 extended the mandate of UNAMIR once again to include assisting in the safe and voluntary repatriation of the approximately two million refugees outside of Rwanda



Resolution 955 (1994) established the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda intending to "prosecute persons responsible for genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of Rwanda and neighboring States, between 1 January 1994 and 31 December 1994".

In January 1994, the commander of UNAMIR, General Roméo Dallaire, sent a "Genocide Fax" to the UN headquarters, warning of the possibility of genocide based on information given by a high-level informant. Several reports were sent to the UN, but they were largely ignored. Early warnings and requests for additional personnel to UNAMIR, as well as strengthened mandates, were not heeded until May 1994, when the UN agreed to reinforce, creating UNAMIR II, but the implementation was slow.



In addition to these resolutions addressing the situation, the Security Council also authorized French-led forces to conduct a humanitarian mission titled Operation Turquoise in 1994. This mission saved numerous civilians in West Rwanda but is said to have allowed soldiers and members of the military involved in the genocide to flee the country, prompting discussions on whether or not the operation was successful.

Recommendations for Creating a Resolution

When working towards a solution, delegates should consider these elements:

- Crafting possible solutions that the permanent members of the Security Council can agree to.
- It is important to craft solution based on collaboration and dialogue, and remaining open to negotiations and diplomatic dialogue.
- Keeping in mind that the issue affects Rwandan people primarily, therefore it may be smart to emphasize local actors in the creation of solutions to political and social issues.
- Lastly, thinking about how to rectify a problem that has resulted in significant loss of lives and a fragmentation is complex. Considering solutions that include accountability, education, and promotion of unity is important.

Additionally, keeping in mind that the Historical Security Council is set in 1995, the delegates should conduct research on the information available at that time, and refrain from discussing initiatives and/or developments that happened after this year. Understanding the mandate of the security council will be helpful when creating a solution, as well as an understanding of how the UN collaborates with civil society and other international actors.



Questions to Consider

1. How can unity and collaboration be promoted in the aftermath of such a divisive history and genocide?
2. In what ways may the council assist the creation of just political, social, and economic systems?
3. What role, if any, do colonial dynamics have in the issue?





FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1

UN timeline of events and history

<https://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/historical-background.shtml#:~:text=In%20November%201994%2C%20the%20UN,Rwanda%20between%201%20January%20and>

2

On the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

<https://unictr.irmct.org/en/ictr-milestones>
<https://unictr.irmct.org/en/tribunal>

3

UN resolutions on Rwanda 1994-1995

http://unscr.com/en/country/RWA?topic_id=75

4

Mandate of the Security Council

<https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/what-security-council#:~:text=to%20maintain%20international%20peace%20and,harmonizing%20the%20actions%20of%20nations.>

5

On the causes of the genocide

<https://humanrights.ca/story/what-led-genocide-against-tutsi-rwanda>

6

On tensions between Hutu and Tusi

<https://humanrights.ca/story/what-led-genocide-against-tutsi-rwanda>