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## **Addressing Global Conflict and Security in the Context of Climate Change**

When observing global conflict, one can see the multitude of factors playing into, initiating, or elevating contention. These factors include food and water shortages, overcrowding in cities, cultural tensions, poor infrastructure, and climate change. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) defines climate change as “a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.”<sup>1</sup> Most scientists agree climate change is largely a result of human activity, such as burning fossil fuels and deforestation. Specifically, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s (IPCC) Fifth Assessment Report states, “with 95 percent certainty that the human influence on the climate system is clear and is evident from the increasing greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere, positive radiative forcing, observed warming, and understanding of the climate system.”<sup>2</sup> Some of climate change’s effects include melting polar ice caps, rising sea levels, increasingly higher global temperatures, and increasing greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere. Even if carbon emissions cease today, the effects will impact our world for the next few centuries. In fact, “global emissions of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) have increased by

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<sup>1</sup> “Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability,” Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, last modified 2015, <http://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/tar/wg2/index.php?idp=689>.

<sup>2</sup> IPCC, 2014: Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [Core Writing Team, R.K. Pachauri and L.A. Meyer (eds.)]. IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland, 151 pp.

almost 50 per cent since 1990.”<sup>3</sup> Climate change affects every country and territory in the world today, and its impacts will worsen the further it progresses.

### **The Syrian Crisis**

Climate change itself can unpack many problems associated with global conflict. For example, the Syrian conflict started with a drought in 2006. The drought was the worst the country had faced in 900 years.<sup>4</sup> Because of this, approximately 1.5 million rural people were pushed into cities with Iraqi refugees.<sup>5</sup> The water scarcity and increase in food prices only led to more civil unrest. While climate change is not the only actor in the Syrian conflict, it did exacerbate existing discord in the nation.<sup>6</sup> Two major issues concerning nations as a result of the Syrian crisis are the rise of the terrorist group ISIS and the increase of migrants to Europe.<sup>7</sup> Many climate scientists agree Syria will not be the only example of increasing conflict as a result of climate change. As sea levels rise and water shortages increase, so too will global conflict.

The Middle East and Northern Africa are most at risk for water shortages due to climate change.<sup>8</sup> Climate change will only increase instability in these regions due to the lack of access to food and water, spreading diseases such as the zika virus and malaria, displacement of peoples, and mass migration towards arable land and water sources.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> “Goal 13: Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and its Impacts,” United Nations, Accessed September 1, 2016, <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-change-2/>.

<sup>4</sup> Vikram Mansharamani, “A Major Contributor to the Syrian Conflict? Climate Change,” PBS Newshour, last modified March 17, 2016, <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/making-sense/a-major-contributor-to-the-syrian-conflict-climate-change/>.

<sup>5</sup> Vikram Mansharamani, 2016.

<sup>6</sup> Vikram Mansharamani, 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Vikram Mansharamani, 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Vikram Mansharamani, 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Vikram Mansharamani, 2016.

## Water Resources and Rising Sea Levels

One of the major problems facing the world is a lack of clean drinking water. The world is about seventy percent water, yet 97.5 percent is salty ocean water, making it unable to be consumed by humans.<sup>10</sup> According to Vikram Mansharamani, “the already scarce supply of the freshwater consumable by plants, animals and humans is being further limited by climate change, which is changing historical rainfall patterns and increasing the severity of storms.”<sup>11</sup> One of the most demanding freshwater consumers is agriculture, using approximately ninety percent of freshwater resources.<sup>12</sup> Also, the exponentially increasing global population and its need for produce, meat, and fresh drinking water have increased the demand on the freshwater which is already in short supply.<sup>13</sup>

Rising sea levels provide a challenge for small island nation states, such as the Maldives or Tuvalu. The Maldives have the lowest high elevation point of any nation, putting them most at risk for being completely overtaken by water in years to come.<sup>14</sup> Primary concern is for the Maldivian people who will lose their homes and nation by slowly losing land every year, until it becomes obsolete.<sup>15</sup> The second concern is what to do with people who will become refugees. A majority of the Maldivian economy is based on tourism, so the people would have to move to a location similar to their own, which would of course be facing the same problems due to receding coastlines, or they would have to develop new skills to survive on whatever land or resourced they are given.<sup>16</sup> This is true for coastal cities in member states that are not island

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<sup>10</sup> Vikram Mansharamani, “Water Wars Are Coming,” PBS Newshour, last modified November 16, 2015, <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/making-sense/water-wars-are-brewing/>.

<sup>11</sup> Vikram Mansharamani, 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Vikram Mansharamani, 2015.

<sup>13</sup> Vikram Mansharamani, 2015.

<sup>14</sup> Nemat Sadat, “Small Islands, Rising Seas,” UN Chronicle, last modified August 2009, <https://unchronicle.un.org/article/small-islands-rising-seas>.

<sup>15</sup> Nemat Sadat, 2009.

<sup>16</sup> Nemat Sadat, 2009.

nation states. The largest concern, however, is for small island nation states who will be completely overtaken by the rising sea levels before the end of this century.

### **Addressing the Issue**

Many countries have addressed climate change apart from the United Nations. Australia passed legislation which taxed the 500 worst polluters on every ton of carbon they emit, effective in July 2012, which drastically decreased the amount of carbon being released.<sup>17</sup> Two years later, however, the carbon tax was repealed and emissions rose again.<sup>18</sup> Some nations have stated they would reduce their carbon emissions, such as Russia, The United States, Japan, Indonesia, and other nations. Nations are focusing on reducing deforestation and increasing the amount and use of renewable energy sources such as wind turbines, solar panels, and hydroelectricity.<sup>19</sup>

The United Nations Member States have come together on a few occasions to tackle climate change to deal with its impact on current and future generations. The problem is if even one, or even a few specific countries reduce their carbon emissions and the others continue or increase their carbon emissions, the net impact will be null. Emissions from one nation will certainly affect every other nation. It is critical international coordination and cooperation take place. There is a need for special focus on helping developing nations reduce their carbon emissions in a way that will not impede the growth of their economies.

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<sup>17</sup> “What Countries are Doing to Tackle Climate Change,” NPR, accessed September 1, 2016, <http://www.npr.org/2011/12/07/143302823/what-countries-are-doing-to-tackle-climate-change>.

<sup>18</sup> “What Countries are Doing to Tackle Climate Change,” 2016.

<sup>19</sup> “What Countries are Doing to Tackle Climate Change,” 2016.

## The Kyoto Protocol

The Kyoto Protocol is an international agreement created by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which commits its Parties to set internationally binding emission reduction targets. According to the UNFCCC, “the Kyoto Protocol was adopted in Kyoto, Japan, on 11 December 1997 and entered into force on 16 February 2005. The detailed rules for the implementation of the Protocol were adopted at COP 7 in Marrakesh, Morocco, in 2001, and are referred to as the ‘Marrakesh Accords.’ Its first commitment period started in 2008 and ended in 2012.”<sup>20</sup> It tasks developed nations with more responsibility for emission reduction, due to their involvement in manufacturing and pollution since the Industrial Revolution. Under the Kyoto Protocol, national measures should be the initial method for nation states approaching emission reduction.

The protocol also offers three other market-based mechanisms to meet reduction goals. These mechanisms include international emissions trading, clean development mechanism (CDM), and joint implementation (JI).<sup>21</sup> International emissions trading happens when a specific country is under the amount of emission units it is allowed to have, so they are able to sell those units to other countries who have used more than their allotted emissions, just like any other commodity.<sup>22</sup> The clean development mechanism (CDM) is when a country can help carry out an emission reduction plan in developing nations, thereby earning certified emission reduction (CER) credits that are done as one ton of CO<sub>2</sub>. These plans could be anything helping install or make renewable energy available to developing nations.<sup>23</sup> Joint implementation is when a

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<sup>20</sup> “Kyoto Protocol,” United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, accessed August 30, 2016, [http://unfccc.int/kyoto\\_protocol/items/2830.php](http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/items/2830.php).

<sup>21</sup> “Kyoto Protocol,” 2016.

<sup>22</sup> “International Emissions Trading,” United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, accessed August 30, 2016, [http://unfccc.int/kyoto\\_protocol/mechanisms/emissions\\_trading/items/2731.php](http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/mechanisms/emissions_trading/items/2731.php).

<sup>23</sup> “Clean Development Mechanism (CDM),” United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, accessed August 30, 2016, [http://unfccc.int/kyoto\\_protocol/mechanisms/clean\\_development\\_mechanism/items/2718.php](http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/mechanisms/clean_development_mechanism/items/2718.php).

country helps implement an emission reduction project in another country, whereby the host country receives the benefit of foreign investment and the implementing country receives a credit of one ton of CO<sub>2</sub>.<sup>24</sup> These regulations are monitored by registry systems and the UN Climate Change Secretariat, based in Germany, keeps record to make sure all transactions are done according to the term agreed under the Kyoto Protocol.<sup>25</sup>

### **The Paris Agreement**

The Paris Agreement was initially signed on April 22, 2016. So far, there are 175 signatories. The main task of the Paris Agreement is helping the global community aim to reduce the global temperature by 2 degrees Celsius, but drive for a decrease of 1.5 degrees Celsius.<sup>26</sup> The Paris Agreement was implemented to provide a legitimate direction and guideline for Sustainable Development Goal Thirteen. Sustainable Development Goal targets the following:

“strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries, integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning, improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning, implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its

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<sup>24</sup> “Joint Implementation (JI),” United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, accessed August 30, 2016, [http://unfccc.int/kyoto\\_protocol/mechanisms/joint\\_implementation/items/1674.php](http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/mechanisms/joint_implementation/items/1674.php).

<sup>25</sup> “Kyoto Protocol,” 2016.

<sup>26</sup> “Paris Climate Agreement,” United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, accessed September 1, 2016, <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climatechange/#>.

capitalization as soon as possible, promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities.”<sup>27</sup>

The Paris Agreement helps reach this goal by requiring individual countries take initiative to develop nationally determined climate action plans based on their ability and circumstances. By the end of the conference, 190 countries had turned in their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDC).<sup>28</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Climate change is the most demanding issue facing the global community. With the alarming rate at which sea levels rise, freshwater becomes scarce, and environmental disaster occurs, nations face impending conflict as a result of the lack of basic survival needs. The threat of conflict can be seen currently through the Syrian crisis and rising sea levels for small island nation states. Because of the link between carbon emissions and the burning of fossil fuels, the United Nations has responded to the threat with the Sustainable Development Goals and initiatives such as the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. Through these initiatives, the United Nations hopes to greatly decrease carbon emissions, thereby decreasing the global temperature. As conflicts increase as a result from global climate change, it is imperative to take actions to decrease measures that further climate change.

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<sup>27</sup> “Goal 13: Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and its Impacts,” 2016.

<sup>28</sup> “Paris Climate Agreement,” 2016.

**Questions to Consider**

1. In what ways is your nation being affected by climate change?
2. What steps has your nation taken to reduce climate change?
3. Has your nation taken action on the Kyoto Protocol or the Paris Agreement? If so, in what way?
4. Have all measures been addressed in the Paris Agreement?
5. In what ways can the United Nations address issues of conflict caused by climate change?
6. How should areas afflicted by extreme climate conditions be assisted, such as Syria or small island nation states?



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- “Goal 13: Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and its Impacts,” United Nations, Accessed September 1, 2016, <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-change-2/>.
- “Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability,” Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, last modified 2015, <http://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/tar/wg2/index.php?idp=689>.
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### **Ensuring Human Security in Conflict and Post Conflict Countries**

At the time the United Nations Charter was adopted, the idea of human security was rooted in the interaction of States. Issues of peace and security, as well as economic and social progress and human rights, were viewed as matters to be resolved through cooperation. “At the start of the century, the protection of peoples was among the most important issues before us,” summarized Lloyd Axworthy, former Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs.<sup>1</sup> Since the creation of the United Nations, it has been one of the major contexts for development in international organizations, while evolving with the changing need for peace and security. Peace, justice, respect for human rights, and economic and social development were originally, and currently are, the vision of the United Nations.<sup>2</sup> Past or future policy mandated by the United Nations has and will correspond to these principles. Throughout the organization’s existence, the UN has been certain to include respect for the rights of all nations no matter their size. This respect in turn includes the cooperation of economic and social systems, concentration on international crises, forming international civil services as necessary, and the use of the established world court<sup>3</sup>. The United Nations has operated with a fundamental belief that ensuring human security is of the utmost importance, operating through several decades and creating myriad policies and resolutions all with respect for the international community’s complications.

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<sup>1</sup> MacFarland, Neil. United Nations Intellectual History Project, 01 Apr. 2006. Web.

<sup>2</sup>Ramcharan, Bertrand. "Human Rights and Human Security." *Blackboard Angleo*. BBCweb, June 2004. Web.

<sup>3</sup> Thakur, Ramesha. N.p.: n.p., n.d. *Google Books*. Cambridge University Press, 8 Jan. 2006. Web.

The post-Cold war political climate gave the impression that political agendas would be addressed and the United Nations, specifically the General Assembly, would begin once again generating international schemas. The decrease of international rivalries in the 1990s recreated a confidence in building sustainable peace through global compromise. This post-conflict world fostered expectations of the international community transcending global threats and conflict by focusing intensely on development and human rights.<sup>4</sup> Throughout the following years, human security, peacekeeping and building and a global partnership would reach the United Nations political stage. However, optimism soon faded when the decade following the Cold War was filled with non-traditional threats against human security. This divided the international community and cultivated tense relations between select conflict and non-conflict countries.

### **Dynamics of Human Security**

According to the Commission on Human Security (CHS), the need for a new paradigm of security is associated with two sets of dynamics. First, human security must respond to the complexity and the interrelatedness of both old and new security threats – from chronic and persistent poverty to ethnic violence, human trafficking, climate change, health pandemics, international terrorism, and sudden economic and financial downturns. Such threats tend to acquire transnational dimensions and move beyond traditional notions of security that focus on external military aggressions alone. Second, the approach to human security must be comprehensive, utilizing the wide range of new opportunities to tackle such threats in an integrated manner. Human security threats cannot be tackled through conventional mechanisms

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<sup>4</sup> Upadhyaya, P. (2004) Human Security, Humanitarian Intervention and Third World Concerns. *Denver Journal of International Law and Policy*, 3371.

alone. Rather, they require a new consensus that acknowledges linkages and interdependencies between development, human rights and national security.<sup>5</sup>

Human security is a dynamic and multi-platform framework for addressing widespread threats facing both governments and people. Policies created to combat human security issues must recognize that threats vary in location, time and action. Therefore, policy makers must focus on creating comprehensive, context-specific and preventive measures to ensure the security of world citizens.<sup>6</sup> By identifying specific needs of different populations, human security measures are able to more directly and positively affect the daily lives of those at risk. As a result of these progressive measures, such as analyzing the causes of threats and creating priority actions based on actual needs of people, the advancement of human security has given rise to more instantaneous and palpable results.<sup>7</sup> Continuing this trend strengthens the decisive actions of policymakers.

The United Nations believes “freedom from pervasive threats to people’s rights, their safety or even their lives”<sup>8</sup> is a natural right of all people. Now though, the definition of what constitutes and what influences human security is changing. Freedom from want and freedom from fear are increasingly recognized as part of human security. Human security itself is rooted not simply in the actions of States, but of external and international groups as well. Some states actively work against the security of their own citizenry. Interethnic conflicts, regional instability

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<sup>5</sup> Human Security Unit. (2013). Human security in theory and practice. *United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security*.

<sup>6</sup> Human Security Unit. (2013). Human security in theory and practice. *United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security*.

<sup>7</sup> UNDP. (2015). The human security framework and national human development reports. *United Nations Development Programme*

<sup>8</sup>United Nations. (2001). Human Security. *Human Security Network*.

and terrorist attacks have clearly demonstrated that the state is not the sole actor, but this does not discount their responsibility.

Kanti Bajpai, a notable international affairs analyst, writes, “human security relates to the protection of the individual’s personal safety and freedom from direct and indirect threats of violence; the promotion of human development and good governance, and, when necessary, the collective use of sanctions and force are central to managing human security.”<sup>9</sup> The Commission on Human Security re-conceptualizes security in a fundamental way by:

- (i) Moving away from traditional, state-centric conceptions of security that focused primarily on the safety of states from military aggression, to one that concentrates on the security of the individuals, their protection and empowerment;
- (ii) Drawing attention to a multitude of threats that cut across different aspects of human life and thus highlighting the interface between security, development and human rights;
- (iii) Promoting a new integrated, coordinated and people-centered approach to advancing peace, security and development within and across nations.

The difference between sovereignty and human security must be understood before either can be satisfied. The effect of sovereignty on human security, which exists as a spider’s-web of interconnected issues and multi-layered threats, is great. States control policy direction and assistance, whether humanitarian or military, in times of need. The responsibility of coordinating use of state sovereignty in order to more effectively address the issue of human security falls to the United Nations.

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<sup>9</sup> Kanti Bajpai. The Idea of a Human Security Audit. Joan B. Kroc Institute Report, No. 19. Fall 2000, p. 1-4.

The United Nations has the influence within the international community to not only build, supply, and fund security and peacekeeping organizations, but also has the power to make sanctions or act against any specific peoples. The latter action is used when a country or peoples is proved to be denying world citizens of their security. According to the 2001 United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, human security is a progressing concept.<sup>10</sup> Policies addressing human security by United Nations should exist as equally progressive, and strive to achieve such a world in which every citizen would be guaranteed freedom from fear and freedom from want, along with an equal chance to fulfill their desired potential.<sup>11</sup> To do so a variety of factors must be examined, including political and social inclusions and exclusions, involuntary and voluntary migration of peoples, and the recovery of hierarchical roles and participation, along with other basics of security. Recognizing the importance of human security is essential to international and national security. The graph below, extracted from the UNDP 1994 Human Development Report, outlines different threat possibilities.

*Possible Types of Human Security Threats<sup>12</sup>*

| Types of Security | Examples of Main Threats   |
|-------------------|--|
| Economic          | persistent poverty, unemployment   |
| Food              | hunger, famine   |
| Health            | deadly infectious diseases, unsafe food, malnutrition, lack of access to basic health care |
| Environmental     | environmental degradation, resource depletion, natural disasters, pollution                |
| Personal          | physical violence, crime, terrorism, domestic violence, child labor                        |
| Community         | inter-ethnic, religious and other identity based tensions                                  |
| Political         | political repression, human rights abuses  |

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Millennium Report, Chapter 3, p.43-44.

<sup>11</sup>United Nations. (2001). Human Security. *Human Security Network*.

<sup>12</sup> Spagnol, G. (April 2015). Responsibility to Protect (R2P): Panacea or Trojan horse for intervention.

Additionally, the difference between conflict and post-conflict countries must be understood. Post-conflict countries are states aiming to maintain peace and security and retain socio-economic standards after a war or conflict.<sup>13</sup> The term post-conflict does not indicate that the cause of the conflict or war has been terminated, only that an opportunity for reconstruction has occurred. If this opportunity is mistreated conflict can and often will begin again. On the other hand, conflict countries, according to the UNESCO, focuses on political incompatibility between the state governments and the factions using violent means.<sup>14</sup>

Many of the threats to human security arise as a part of a culture of impunity. Within many conflict and post-conflict countries, there has been such a disintegration of state that citizens can commit any act without fear of retribution or punishment. This, in turn, fosters a culture of impunity. In order to effectively protect human security states must reassert the rule of law. This is easier said than done, but nonetheless exists as an important step in ensuring human security.

### **Existing Framework for Ensuring Human Security**

The United Nations must pursue and recognize mistreatments or other harsh realities within the world community, while attempting to correct or restore human security. Additionally, the United Nations has stressed the importance of human security within conflict and post-conflict countries. While governments are the most direct means of ensuring secure livelihoods for their population, recent crises demonstrate how threats to human security may go beyond government control. Encouraging more multilateral collaborations when initiating the application of human security has, as a result, become a necessity. The United Nations is mandated to

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<sup>13</sup> Tzifakis, N. (2013). Post-conflict economic reconstruction. *Encyclopedia Princetoniensis*. Web.

<sup>14</sup> Strand, H., & Dahl, M. (2010). Defining conflict-affected countries. *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*.



address security, development, and human rights when applying new fractions of human security to different systems.<sup>15</sup>

Emerging from the mistreatment and horrific acts perpetrated during the World Wars, The Charter of the United Nations General Assembly established the international human rights in 1948, a landmark achievement in world history.<sup>16</sup> It was the first time that the international community created a specific standard of human rights meant to be enjoyed by all people everywhere. This universal declaration acts as the basis for actions by the UN regarding conflict and post-conflict citizens. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was meant to secure human beings' freedoms, dignity, equality, or other rights. Article 28 further states everyone should have the fundamental ability to have their rights recognized.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, the United Nations' Department of Political Affairs has a Framework Team to "help identify situations of concern,"<sup>18</sup> which then makes the Secretary-General and corresponding committees aware of appropriate action. Moreover, this department is mandated to "provide advice and support on all political matters to the Secretariat in the exercise of global responsibility under the Charter relating to the maintenance and restoration of peace and security."<sup>19</sup> The United Nations has also created the UN Peacekeeping operations.<sup>20</sup> After generations of UN Peacekeeping operations taking place, it has become an organization working within a compressed timeframe and with major precedents. The main objective of this organization is to "help countries torn by conflict create the conditions for lasting peace; being comprised of civilian, police and military

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<sup>15</sup> Human Security Approach. (2015). Actors responsible for advancing human security. *UNTFHS*.

<sup>16</sup>Ramcharan, Bertrand. "Human Rights and Human Security." *Blackboard Angleo*. BBCweb, June 2004. Web.

<sup>17</sup>(1948). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. *United Nations*.

<sup>18</sup>Ramcharan, Bertrand. "Human Rights and Human Security." *Blackboard Angleo*. BBCweb, June 2004. Web.

<sup>19</sup> "Department of Political Affairs (DPA)." *DPA*. Department of Political Affairs, 2016. Web.

<sup>20</sup> Thakur, Ramesha. N.p.: n.p., n.d. *Google Books*. Cambridge University Press, 8 Jan. 2006. Web.

personnel.”<sup>21</sup> The United Nations continuously assists and maintains peace and security within conflict and post-conflict countries, while also being increasingly challenged with additional political, reintegrating, disarming and supporting operations. Among these are 1978 Afghanistan, 2011 Syria, 2011 South Sudan, 2012 Northern Mali, 2015 Turkey and many others.

### **Recent United Nations Actions**

The Commission on Human Security was launched in 2000 at the United Nations Millennium Summit. The purpose of the Commission was to review evolving trends of analysis and make recommendations for future endeavors. Being led by the former head of UNHCR, the Commission completed its task in 2003 by publishing a report titled “Human Security Now: Protecting and Empowering People.”<sup>22</sup> As a result, a new archetype for considering key concerns and monitoring priorities in times of crises was established.

While this was an important step, it was not the first success of the General Assembly with regards to Human Security. In prior years, the General Assembly established the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS). In March 1999, the United Nations’ Secretariat, together with leading governments, launched the UNTFHS in order to finance human security operations. Operations have had a larger effect resulting from this organization’s commitment to applying human security to international problems. Successes include, but are not limited to, the Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Landmines and the establishment of the

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<sup>21</sup> "About Us. United Nations Peacekeeping." *UN News Center*. United Nations, 2016. Web.

<sup>22</sup> Human Security Unit. (2013). Human security in theory and practice. *United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security*.

International Criminal Court.<sup>23</sup> The Human Security Unit (HSU) was established in 2004 in order to acknowledge the expanded nature and correlation of security challenges.<sup>24</sup> The HSU recognizes and addresses the correlation between human and state security, and stresses the link between development and conflict. HSU responds to situations of human insecurity, creates practical frameworks for UN programs, and fosters collaboration between states, among other initiatives.<sup>25</sup>

Additionally, in 2001 the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) was established and underscores the duty of states to protect their populations from threats of any type. R2P is based on three pillars. First, every state has the responsibility to protect its populations from attacks such as genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, or crimes against humanity. Second, the international community must encourage and assist states maintain that responsibility. Third, if a state cannot rightly protect its population, the international community is responsible for acting in the states place. Although R2P may seem basic, after the 2011 Libya intervention there has been much debate over this framework. Some critics have branded it as simply a new form of colonialism, because it allows Western society to intervene in instances where local populaces may not agree; arguing that R2P is too ambitious in its measures to protect.<sup>26</sup> Jennifer Welsh, a UN Special Adviser of R2P, opposes this viewpoint, drawing focus to the third pillar and the responsibility of the international community to protect all world citizens from crimes.<sup>27</sup> Whatever the measure of R2P implication, there are countries (for example Russia and China)

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<sup>23</sup> Human Security Unit. (2013). Human security in theory and practice. *United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security*.

<sup>24</sup> Shusterman, J. (2006). An interview with the Human Security Unit. *Human Security Journal* (2), 97-103.

<sup>25</sup> United Nations. (2001). Human Security. *Human Security Network*.

<sup>26</sup> Spagnol, G. (April 2015). Responsibility to Protect (R2P): Panacea or Trojan horse for intervention.

<sup>27</sup> Spagnol, G. (April 2015). Responsibility to Protect (R2P): Panacea or Trojan horse for intervention.

who will remain skeptical of the Security Council's using R2P. Other countries, like the United States, will be more accepting.

When the deadliest fighting since World War II broke out in 1998 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (causing nearly 5.4 million deaths along and displacing 1.5 million persons) the United Nations took interest.<sup>28</sup> The Security Council's action in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) was the first time the United Nations had mandated aggressive sanctions within a member state. In June 2016, the Security Council renewed MONUSCO, established by resolutions SC/RES/1279<sup>29</sup> and SC/RES/1291. MONUSCO exists as a series of peacekeeping missions set to monitor the process of working towards peace in the Congo.<sup>30</sup> The original resolutions were created as an opportunity to encourage peace, but the deaths and conflict continued. As a result, the peacekeeping operation was altered, making it more aggressive. SC/RES/2098 primed the Congo with 19,000 military personnel, including an "Intervention Brigade" containing three infantry divisions, an artillery division, a special force and an investigation company.<sup>31</sup> The intense parading of "peacekeeping" continued until 2015 when SC/RES/2211 began the deduction of troops.<sup>32</sup> There has continued to be a deduction of MONUSCO troops, and as they continue to achieve goals maintained in MONUSCO's mandate deduction will continue.

## **Conclusion**

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<sup>28</sup> Soderlund, W.C., Briggs, E.D., Najem, T.P., Roberts, B.C. (2013). Africa's deadliest conflict. *Wilfrid Laurier University Press*.

<sup>29</sup> UN Security Council. (30 Nov. 1999). Resolution 1279.

<sup>30</sup> UN Security Council. (24 Feb. 2000). Resolution 1291.

<sup>31</sup> UN Security Council. (28 March 2013). Resolution 2098.

<sup>32</sup> UN Security Council. (25 March 2015). Resolution 2211.

The United Nations has established human security as an extremely important part of the UN agenda. While the definition of human security evolves, so too must the resolutions for the disavowed actions of conflict and post-conflict countries. The United Nations must be adaptable while the international environment shifts its focus and crises arise. Proposed notions not only need to be able to adapt to changing focus from security to humanitarian assistance, from security to peacebuilding and all other sectors that may arise. Additionally, the United Nations and organizations thereof continue to generate a recognition for the importance of establishing and institutionalizing systems to avoid a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach.

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How can concepts of human security be incorporated as to include a sovereignty definition?
2. How may the conflict over R2P affect future resolutions? Where should Member States draw the line?
3. What are the different models of human security? What are the sources of these differences?
4. What does your member state do to protect the human security of its citizens and can any of these policies be implemented on an international level?
5. If there is a debate over what is UN human security measures, how can human security or variations thereof be valid?

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