

STUDY GUIDE

SPECPOL

University Committee

ZuMUN 2024

April 12 - 14





Special Political and Decolonization Committee

Study Guide for Zurich Model United Nations 2024

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April 12 – 14, 2024

Zurich, Switzerland

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Letter from the Chairs



Seif Salem: Hello delegates, I am Seif, a 22-year-old doing his MSc at ETHZ in Management, Technology, and Economics. I am Tunisian, really passionate about African politics and yes, I am the one who came up with these topics haha :) I have done more MUNs than I can remember and now that I am approaching the end of my studies I realize that this might very well be my last conference. So I will enjoy every single moment of it with you guys!



Noham Ayache : Dear delegates ! It is a pleasure for me to be your chair during these few days for the 2 topics! I am Noham Ayache and I'm 19. I'm studying a double degree of languages and French law! I discovered MUN at the start of the year and I really love it, I did some MUN as delegate and for this MUN, it will be my first time as chair so I hope that will be a very good experience! I really want to meet you so let's go and enjoy this MUN!



Ted Yip: Hello! I'm Ted, currently a first year BSc Politics and International Relations student at University College London (UCL), and an incoming student of BA Human, Social and Political Sciences at the University of Cambridge. I was born and raised in Hong Kong, but I'm now living in London. My interest in politics spans from conceptualizing social movements to analyzing global conflicts. Although I didn't have the chance to do MUN in high school, my passion for MUN never faded away - I have participated in multiple university-level conferences, and am currently serving as the First Year Representative at UCL United Nations Association. I am really excited to chair the SPECPOL committee at ZuMUN this year and I look forward to meeting all of you in the committee! Outside of MUN, you might find me either playing on a public piano (which I have been playing for more than 15 years) or studying in the UCL Student Centre until 1am (thankfully it's open 24/7). (ps: I'm also the Director General of UCLMUN 2024, come join us this October if you can!)

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL) of the Zurich Model United Nations (ZuMUN) 2024. As your Chairs, we are excited to facilitate discussions on critical global issues within our committee's scope. We encourage you to thoroughly review the study guide, familiarize yourself with the rules of procedure, and prepare to engage in dynamic negotiations and debates.

This conference offers a unique platform for diplomatic engagement and problem-solving. We urge you to approach the agenda with an open mind, respect for diverse viewpoints, and a commitment to constructive dialogue. Our aim is to foster an environment where every delegate feels valued and empowered to contribute to meaningful outcomes.

Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions as you prepare for the conference. We look forward to a productive and memorable experience in SPECPOL and to seeing the innovative solutions and diplomacy you will bring to the table.

With love from your Chairs of the SPECPOL Committee
Zurich Model United Nations (ZuMUN) 2024

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Special Political and Decolonization Committee

The United Nations Special Political and Decolonization Committee, commonly known as SPECPOL, is one of the six main committees of the United Nations General Assembly (United Nations, 2024). Established in 1961 through the UN General Assembly Session 16 Resolution 1654, SPECPOL plays a crucial role in addressing various political and decolonization issues around the world (United Nations, 1961). With a focus on promoting peace, stability, and self-determination, SPECPOL serves as a platform for member states to discuss and develop policies on a wide range of topics, including decolonization, peacekeeping operations, and outer space affairs (United Nations, 2024).

SPECPOL's primary mandate is to address matters related to decolonization and the eradication of colonialism in all its forms. Since its inception, the committee has been actively engaged in assisting territories and peoples under colonial rule to achieve self-determination and independence. It monitors the progress made by the Non-Self-Governing Territories and encourages dialogue and cooperation between administering powers, the territories, and other relevant stakeholders. SPECPOL works towards ensuring that the right to self-determination, as enshrined in the UN Charter, is respected and upheld.

In addition to its focus on decolonization, SPECPOL also addresses a wide array of political issues. It serves as a forum for member states to discuss conflicts, political instability, and regional disputes, with the aim of finding peaceful solutions and promoting dialogue. The committee examines various challenges related to peacekeeping operations, including the deployment and effectiveness of UN peacekeepers, the protection of civilians in conflict zones, and the coordination of humanitarian assistance. SPECPOL plays a vital role in shaping the UN's peacekeeping agenda and formulating policies to enhance the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions.

Furthermore, SPECPOL addresses matters pertaining to outer space affairs, including the peaceful uses of outer space, space debris mitigation, and the prevention of an arms race in

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space. As space exploration and utilization continue to advance, the committee seeks to ensure the responsible and sustainable use of outer space for the benefit of all nations, while preventing the weaponization of this critical domain.

Delegates of SPECPOL will have the unique opportunity to delve into these pressing issues, analyze their complexities, and propose solutions that promote peace, stability, and self-determination. This committee's work requires diplomacy, negotiation, and sound resolution formulation to address the multifaceted challenges faced by the international community.

In closing, the United Nations Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL) stands as a platform for member states to discuss and address issues related to decolonization, peacekeeping operations, and outer space affairs. By engaging in fruitful debates and collaborating with fellow delegates, you have the power to contribute to the development of policies that shape the future of these crucial areas within the global context.

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Promoting Democratic Governance in Post-Colonial States

Introduction

In the aftermath of colonial rule, over 80 nations embarked on a journey toward self-governance, with the majority gaining independence between the 1940s and 1960s. Establishing democratic governance in these post-colonial states has been a monumental challenge, with only about 60% showing significant progress towards stable democratic systems. The role of the international community is critical in supporting the establishment of democratic structures that are inclusive, effective, and conducive to peace and development.

Navigating the Legacy: The Roadblocks to Democracy after Decolonization

Post-colonial states face numerous hurdles in achieving democratic governance. For example, sub-Saharan Africa, with over 40 post-colonial nations, exhibits a wide range of governance models, from stable democracies to authoritarian regimes. A significant challenge is the colonial legacy of drawn borders that amalgamate diverse ethnic groups. A striking example is Myanmar, where the British colonial legacy of divide and rule has contributed to ongoing ethnic strife and political instability. The country's diverse groups, including the Rohingya, have suffered marginalization and violence, complicating the path to a unified democratic governance. Additionally, the economic structures left behind often prioritize extraction over development, hindering sustainable growth and equality.

From Colonies to Independent Nations: A Historical Voyage Towards Self-Governance

The decolonization wave post-World War II was marked by rapid transitions to independence, with countries like India in 1947 and Tunisia in 1956 leading the way. However, the road to democracy was fraught with challenges. By the end of the 20th century, only a fraction of these nations had successfully established stable democratic institutions. Despite these challenges,

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nations like Uruguay have emerged as exemplars of democracy in the region, demonstrating stable governance, robust civic liberties, and high levels of social development since returning to democracy in 1985.

Collaborative Efforts and Lone Crusades: Varied Pathways to Democracy

International efforts to promote democracy in post-colonial states have been diverse. The United Nations has undertaken over 60 peacekeeping missions, primarily in post-colonial states, to stabilize regions and support democratic processes. Additionally, the European Union has allocated over €2 billion under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) for the period 2021-2027 to support democracy worldwide. Regional bodies like the African Union have also played pivotal roles, with interventions in member states to resolve conflicts and support democratic governance, as seen in its mediation efforts in the Ivory Coast in 2010.

Democratic Aspirations in a Post-Colonial World: Toward Inclusive and Effective Governance

Promoting democratic governance in post-colonial states requires nuanced approaches that consider each state's unique historical, cultural, and socio-political contexts. The international community's efforts must focus on empowering local institutions and civil society, promoting inclusive governance that accommodates diversity, and fostering economic structures that support equitable development.

Future Horizons: Investigating Solutions for Democratic Consolidation

Delegates are encouraged to explore the following questions in their research and preparation: What specific historical legacies of colonialism impact the political and economic landscape of post-colonial states today?

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How can international actors effectively support democratic governance in post-colonial states without imposing external models?

What role can regional organizations play in promoting democracy within their member states?

How can post-colonial states address ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity within their democratic processes to ensure inclusivity and stability?

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Ensuring the Right to Self-Determination in the Digital Age

Introduction

In today's digital age, the question of guaranteeing the right to self-determination is of crucial importance. As technological advances transform the way we live, work, and communicate, individuals face new challenges in controlling their privacy, personal data, and digital autonomy. Self-determination in this context encompasses the right of individuals to decide how their information is collected, used, and shared online, as well as their ability to influence the algorithmic systems that shape their digital experience.

Self Determination Across History

The aspiration to self-determination has been a fundamental principle throughout human history, but its form and expression have evolved significantly with the advent of the digital age. Historically, the right to self-determination has often been associated with political and social movements seeking to guarantee people control over their political, economic, and cultural destiny. These movements have often been the driving force of struggles for national independence, the recognition of the rights of ethnic and cultural minorities, and the protection of human rights.

The Arrival of the Digital Age: Bigger Needs

Now, with the rise of technology and the advent of the Internet, the notion of self-determination has taken on a new dimension. The digital age has introduced new challenges and opportunities in personal and collective control. On the one hand, digital technologies have offered individuals new means of expression and participation in public life, enabling innovative forms of political and social self-determination. Social media, for example, has played a crucial role in mobilizing people and disseminating information to various social movements around the world.

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Problematics of Self-Determination in the Digital Age

The ubiquity of digital technologies has also raised growing concerns about privacy and data security. Individuals are increasingly concerned about the massive collection of personal data by companies and governments, as well as the use of this data for monitoring and control purposes. In this context, guaranteeing the right to self-determination in the digital age means finding a delicate balance between the benefits of digital connectivity and the protection of individual freedoms.

International actions in its perspective

These actions are both national and international, albeit predominantly national. States regulate the right to Self-determination on a national plan at first with some legislation being state-dependent. However, on an international plan, the European Union adopted data protection and privacy laws, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). More abstractly, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) defines in its article 8 the right to respect for private and family life which can be very important on this topic.

Future Horizons:

Delegates are encouraged to explore the following questions in their research and position papers:

How can international law be adapted to protect the right to self-determination in the digital age?

What role should tech companies play in supporting or undermining self-determination?

How can digital tools be used to promote cultural preservation and the rights of marginalized communities?

What mechanisms can be put in place to prevent digital colonialism and ensure equitable access to digital resources?

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