



UNITED YOUTH MODEL UNITED NATIONS

Chair Report

United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

Formulating Accountability and Transitional Justice
Mechanisms to Prevent Recurring Civilian Human Rights
Violations in Post-Conflict Regions

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Letter from the chairs

Claire Shin - Head Chair

Hello delegates.

My name is Claire, and I am honored to serve as your Head Chair for UYMUN 2026.

Attending numerous conferences in Korea and several international ones, I have built unforgettable memories and experiences, thus affirming my belief that this conference will also be a great learning experience to interact, grow, and have fun.

Outside of MUN, I enjoy playing soccer for my school. I hope all of you are excited for this wonderful opportunity and will bring your best performances to this conference. See you soon!

Minnie Hwang - Deputy Chair

Welcome to the UYMUN! Whether this is your first conference or your tenth, our committee is for everyone to grow their skills as a debater. The only requirements of this committee is an open mind, and your eagerness to learn! We understand that for many of the delegates, this is their first time, so please feel free to ask any questions throughout the conference!

We are your Head and Deputy chair, Nate and Minnie, and it is a great honor to serve you in the UNHRC (United Nations Human Rights Council)

As we prepare to discuss both agendas, we highly encourage you to research your assigned country's policies and stances, and to come up with innovative solutions! While extensive preparation is not mandatory, to be able to enjoy the debate, please come prepared.

We urge all delegates to remember that Model United Nations is not about the ceremonial rewards, or high number of speaking points, but rather a meaningful experience that brings our international community a bit closer to solving global issues!

Committee introduction

The UNHRC (United Nations Human Rights Council) is an intergovernmental body that seeks to promote and protect human rights worldwide through investigation and raising awareness. It was officially established in 1950 by the UNGA (United Nations General Assembly) following World War II. Building upon its role, it addresses human rights violations, upholds fundamental human rights, and authorizes oversight and investigations.

The UNHRC's core mission is to protect the rights of individuals seeking asylum from the international community and address any violations occurring during the process. During this conference, the role of the UNHRC will be to address the issue of transitional justice mechanisms in holding human rights violators accountable through investigations, fact-finding missions, and commissions of inquiry.

UNHRC took action in various global human rights crisis such as establishing an independent international Commission of Inquiry to investigate alleged violations and abuses of human rights committed in the context of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. This committee also implemented technical assistance provided to the National Commission of Inquiry to investigate allegations of violations and abuses committed by all parties to the conflict in Yemen. This shows how UNHRC deals with both manual and technological fields in order to ensure equal and fair rights for all.

Agenda introduction

Armed conflicts leave behind more than physical destruction; they erode institutions, weaken the rule of law, and create cycles of impunity that enable further human rights violations. In many post-conflict regions, civilians continue to suffer from arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances, sexual violence, and discrimination long after formal hostilities have ceased. Without credible accountability mechanisms and inclusive transitional justice processes, fragile peace agreements risk collapse, and mistrust between communities deepens.

Transitional justice mechanisms including truth commissions, reparations programs, institutional reforms, and international or hybrid tribunals play a crucial role in rebuilding societies founded on respect for human rights. However, these processes often face political resistance, lack of funding, or insufficient international coordination. Furthermore, the protection of victims, witnesses, and human rights defenders remains a pressing concern in unstable environments.

The purpose of this agenda is to design comprehensive post-conflict accountability frameworks that prevent the recurrence of civilian human rights violations. Delegates are encouraged to evaluate the role of international cooperation, regional organizations, and domestic legal reforms in strengthening judicial independence and combating impunity. Special consideration should be given to victim-centered approaches, gender-sensitive justice systems, and long-term institutional reforms that reinforce democratic governance and reconciliation.

The UN Security Council and General Assembly have established and supported international criminal tribunals and mixed/hybrid courts to prosecute serious violations of international law. Moving deeper into context, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was located in Arusha, Tanzania, and operated until 2015. This tribunal aimed to prosecute high-level architects of the 100-day genocide, in which an estimated 1 million people were killed. The ICTR became the first international court to define rape and sexual violence as acts of genocide, establishing how certain acts were utilized to deliberately destroy the Tutsi group. This case reflected the primary objective of transitional justice to redress massive human rights abuse and transition into a form of equitable justice.

Key Terms:

1. **Transitional Justice** - Refers to a set of community based, or customary mechanisms used to resolve dispute and managing crime, occurring outsidings of formal state/international legal systems.
2. **Accountability**- principles that individuals, institutions, and authorities are held responsible for their actions, and face consequences if they fail to meet the standards upheld. (Multiple forms of accountability can be discussed, Ex. Institutional accountability, political accountability, social accountability)
3. **Institutional reform**- process of strengthening and changing public institutions—such as government bodies, courts, police, and military, so they are able to line up with the right standards.
4. **Hybrid courts**- A form of court that blends local and international laws/procedures to ensure credible and reliable trials.
5. **Restorative justice**- Approach to justice that focuses on repairing harms, and reconciling with the affected victims rather than simply punishing the offender.
6. **International tribunals**- International tribunals are courts established by the international community to prosecute individuals responsible for international law violations, when national systems are not available.
7. **Vetting and lustration**- A transitional justice measure designed to reform public institutions by removing officials linked to corruption in order to restore reliability in governance. (Vetting- Process of critical evaluation), (Lustration- Prevention of oppressive figures taking authority)
8. **Civilian protection mechanisms security sector reform (SSR)**- Legalized frameworks designed to prevent harm against civilians during armed conflict or political instability.

- 9. Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration (DDR)-** Coordinated measures aimed at removing weapons from combatants, disbanding armed groups and assisting civilians to return to sustainability.
- 10. Civil society organizations (CSOs)-** Non state, not for profit organizations that operate independently from the government to represent the interests of citizens. Promotes engagement, and collective social development.
- 11. Impunity-** is what occurs when perpetrators of crimes are not held accountable, allowing them to act without any consequence. (Opposite of accountability)
- 12. Institutional legitimacy:** institutional legitimacy occurs when the actions of a government or state is justified by the civilians, with moral acceptance and accountability.

Historical Background:

Origins of Transitional Justice (Post World-War II)

Transitional justice emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s as a field focused on addressing massive human rights violations during transitions from conflict or authoritarian rule to democracy. What was special about the Nuremberg Trials was that it established an individual criminal responsibility meaning that merely “following orders” or acting under a higher power is not a justifiable excuse. With the Universal Declaration of Human rights codifying global human rights as norms, justice became linked to preventing future abuses, not just punishing past ones without reform. Rooting in post-WWII Nuremberg Trials, forms of transitional justice would be solidified in Latin America and Eastern Europe as a mechanism for truth-telling, criminal prosecution, and reparations to victims while stabilizing new governments.

Post-conflict regions often face the challenge of rebuilding societies while restoring accountability for the human rights violations that occurred during conflict. Over the decades, UNHRC has developed legal and institutional mechanisms from war crimes tribunals to reconciliation commissions, to hold violators accountable and to support social healing. Without any transitional justice mechanisms, perpetrators will not be held accountable, with cycles of violence, and strengthen collective institutional legitimacy to prevent future violations.

The following below is a summarized historical background of transitional justice mechanisms conducted by the international community:

Timeline:

Year	Historical event	Impact on Transitional Justice
1945-1946	Post WWII, Nuremberg Trials	The first major prosecution of state leaders for war crimes and crimes against humanity post WWII. →Established that in international court, individuals, not just member states can be held accountable.

1948	Universal declaration of Human Rights.	Post the formation of the league of Nations. Global standard for human rights, because the moral and legal basis for later justice mechanisms.
1980-1990s.	Emergence of transitional justice Models	Formal recognition of community-based transitional justice models.
1983	Argentina's National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons	Collective investigations on the forced disappearances after Argentina's former dictatorship. → Formed the Nunca Más, first ever truth commission, that lacked formal authority but became relevant to the Criminal tribunal for former Yugoslavia. Centered victim's narratives.
1993	International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia	First ever UN directed war crimes tribunal since WWII. → Ordered by the security council Resolution 827, branching its violations into the Geneva Conventions. Addressed atrocities occurring during the Balkan conflicts.
1994	International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda	Prosecution of Genocide related crimes. → Advanced legal definitions of genocide and sexual violence. Later became the framework for the African Court on Human and People's Rights.
1995-2002	Truth and Reconciliation Commission.	Focused on truth-telling, conditional amnesty and reconciliation after apartheid.
Late 1990s-2000s	Institutionalization of Transitional Justice	Offers more accessible justice mechanisms in rural areas;

1998	Rome statute	Created the legal foundation for a permanent international criminal court → Founding of the ICC and ICJ through the UN convention However, ICC and ICJ act independently outside of the UN.
Early 2000's	Hybrid courts immerse	Special courts for sierra Leone, courts of cambodia, etc Combination of domestic and international law to strengthen local legitimacy.
2004	UN adoption of formal transitional justice	Adopts a formal transitional justice approach emphasized four pillars: - Truth - Justice - Reparations - And the guarantees of non recurrence growth of: Reparation programs (financial and symbolic.) Institutional reforms (security sector and judiciary) Memorization initiatives

Current state of affairs

Post conflict regions and societies face a challenge: how to address past human rights and war violations while being able to prevent their recurrence. In many cases, weak institutions, political instability, and social division amongst civilians create the conditions where violations are tolerated to persist or reemerge.

While transitional justice is more locally focused, it offers a framework of judicial and non-judicial mechanisms that are designed to promote accountability and long-term stability. These mechanisms are essential not only to address the past atrocities, but also to build safeguards. Transitional justice is evolving from a post-conflict tool into a dynamic and proactive framework addressing ongoing and recurring violations, systemic corruption, and economic violence alongside traditional criminal accountability. The AU provided technical support for the Southern African transitional justice framework in 2025. Also, integrating traditional and indigenous justice mechanisms, which promote reconciliation at the community level.

The AU emphasizes a balanced narrative where accountability and reconciliation should not substitute for each other to prevent instability in fragile contexts.

Organizations like the International Center for Transitional Justice and the African Union continue to push for policies that place the needs of victims at the center. In Ukraine there are efforts to formulate a holistic transitional justice framework amid the ongoing war. There is a strong focus on the documentation of crimes and development of victim-centric arguments for post-conflict recovery. In Syria and Yemen transitional justice mechanisms aim to stop human rights violations and pursue justice through alternative avenues such as the UN's Independent International Commission of Inquiry.

Mechanisms to Consider

Accountability: Accountability is central to preventing cycles of violence. When perpetrators of human rights abuses are not held responsible, a culture of impunity develops, allowing perpetrators to violate without any consequence. Transitional justice mechanisms aim to counter this by ensuring individuals and institutions are held responsible for abuses where they are identified, and where appropriate, prosecuted.

Criminal prosecutions: whether domestic or international, they play a crucial role in this process. They reinforce the rule of law and establish the legal precedents that may deter future violations. However, it is key to note that prosecutions alone are often insufficient in post-conflict settings, where judicial systems may be weak or compromised. As a result, accountability must be understood more broadly incorporating both legal and societal dimensions.

Core transitional justice mechanisms: Effective transitional justice typically involves a combination of complementary mechanisms such as addressing different aspects of past abuses and future prevention:

Truth commissions (Or sometimes referred to as “Truth seeking mechanisms):

Truth commissions are non-judicial bodies that are established to investigate and document any past human rights violations. They provide a platform for victims to share their experiences and help establish an authoritative historical record. By acknowledging victims suffering and publicly recognizing abuses, truth commissions contribute to societal healing and reduce denial or revisionism.

Most importantly, their findings often include recommendations for reforms, which are critical for preventing recurrence. For example, the “South African Truth and Conciliation Commission” (Reference, timeline) demonstrated how public testimony and acknowledgement can foster reconciliation and national dialogue.

Criminal Prosecutions: Judicial accountability mechanisms focus on prosecuting those most responsible for serious recognized crimes such as war crimes, genocide, and crimes against

humanity. Over reliance on punitive justice mechanisms may undermine reconciliation efforts, particularly in vulnerable societies.

Reparation Programs: Reparation provides material or symbolic compensation to victims. These may include financial compensation, healthcare, education benefits, or public acknowledgments such as public recognitions, or memorials.

Reparations are crucial because they serve multiple purposes: they recognize victims' rights, help restore dignity to those who were undermined, and most importantly address the long-term consequences of violence. Reparations rectify past wrongings, thereby rebuilding trust between citizens and institutions

Institutional reforms: Institutional reform might be arguably the most important mechanism for preventing future violations in transitional justice. It involves restructuring state institutions, such as the military, police and judiciary, to eliminate abusive practices and ensure accountability.

Possible Solutions

TRUTH:

Conditional Amnesty Programs:

Conditional Amnesty Programs can be supported with any form of court. Conditional Amnesty Programs, linked to truth telling, can serve as a pragmatic tool for balancing justice and reconciliation, proven to be highly effective in several courts. Rather than granting blanket amnesty, governments can require perpetrators to fully disclose their actions in exchange for reduced or alternative penalties.

A well known implementation of conditional amnesty would be the “Truth Reconciliation Commission” (Reference, Current state of Affairs) where public testimonies played a fundamental role in uncovering the truth about past violations. Through this, courts can encourage transparency while still preserving the possibility of prosecution for those who refuse to cooperate, thereby still being able to maintain accountability.

JUSTICE:

Hybrid Justice systems:

(A balance between International legal frameworks + Domestic courts)

In many of the post conflict societies, national courts lack the capacity or independence through authority to prosecute such crimes. Hybrid courts, such as the “Special Court for Sierra Leone” (Reference, Timeline) address this gap between transitional justice by incorporating international judges, and standards while remaining rooted in the domestic legal system. This model gives the advantages of both domestic and international courts. International courts serve their own advantages of reliability and credibility through the oversight of multiple countries and international judges making biased judgement less likely in justice settings. On the other hand domestic courts are significantly more accessible and dive deeper into context specific details which may be important factors to achieve accurate decisions.

GUARANTEES OF NON-RECURRENCE:

Context Specific Reform of State Institutions:

Security forces and judicial bodies who are often responsible for the past abuses stay in positions of power after the conflict. Reform and State institutions could be:

Vetting processes to remove officials involved in the violations. (Reference, current state of affairs), and restructuring security institutions. This could be achieved through means of establishing strict and operating rules on the use of force, creating enforceable codes of conduct aligned with the international human rights standards. Introduction of Independent civilian oversight bodies to investigate complaints, and consistently monitor the actions of military and police.

Legal and constitutional reforms/sustainable peace

In nations or societies where democratic constitutions are not established yet, they may be revised or embedded human rights protections into frameworks of justice.

Ensuring the representation of marginalized groups, promoting equality, and fostering public awareness of human rights.

Questions to consider

1. How can post conflict states balance accountability with maintaining political stability after conflict?
2. What role should the International Criminal Court play in prosecuting human rights violations when domestic courts are weak?
3. How can security sector reform be implemented effectively to prevent future abuses by military and police forces?
4. Is international justice, such as intervention by the ICC, a violation of national sovereignty?
5. Should former perpetrators be allowed to participate in post conflict governments?
6. Is justice more important than reconciliation in post conflict societies?
7. Should military and police forces be completely dismantled and rebuilt rather than reformed?

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