

Forum: United Nations General Assembly Third Committee

Issue: Implementing means to eradicate instances of ethnic cleansing in the MENA region

Student Office: Anirudh Rohitkumar

Position: President Chair

Introduction to the Topic

Ethnic cleansing is defined as “the mass expulsion or killing of one ethnic or religious group in an area by those of another.” It’s an issue that has plagued various regions around the world and has spanned centuries, the most well known being the Holocaust which happened during the Second World War from 1941 to 1945 in Nazi Germany and saw the murder of 6 million Jews, and millions of Romani people, Poles, disabled individuals, and more. Other examples of ethnic cleansing include the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1942, the Trail of Tears from 1838 to 1839, to more recent examples such as the Rwandan Genocide in 1994, and the ongoing Rohingya Crisis which started in 2017. Another region that has seen many instances of ethnic cleansing is the MENA region. The MENA region is a turbulent landscape that is ripe with conflicts both within a state as well as between different states, political instability, and a host of economic challenges such as high inflation and currency depreciation. This is exemplified through numerous strifes such as the ongoing Israel-Palestine dispute, the Syrian Civil War, and insurgencies in parts of Iraq among many others. Numerous factors contribute to conflicts in various regions, including resource scarcity and the previously mentioned political instability. However, a significant reason for such conflicts lies in the difference of beliefs, cultures, and religions, which can compel states to seek ethnic homogeneity, which is when a region comprises of only 1 ethnicity. This leads to states performing ethnic cleansing in order to achieve that ethnic homogeneity.

The MENA region has seen many instances of ethnic cleansing. The Anfal Campaign in Iran in 1988 saw the genocide of the Kurdish people with the total

number of deaths ranging between 50,000 and 100,000. The Simele Massacre in Iraq in 1933 saw the murder of up to 3,000 Assyrian Christian men, women, and children. The genocide against the Yazidi people in Syria (a country that has seen many other instances of genocide and ethnic cleansing) in 2014 by ISIS saw the killing of 5,000+ people as well as the enslavement of more than 6,000 women and children and the displacement of about 400,000 Yazidis. There is also the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which has been going on since 1948 and has seen the displacement and murder of thousands of Jews. And there are many other instances of ethnic cleansing that has happened in the MENA region across the ages, be it genocide, forced migration and displacement (the movement of a group of people out of a country/region), destruction of cultural monuments, or any other way of ethnic cleansing.

The main aim of ethnic cleansing is to keep a region ethnically homogenous. Certain groups or parties want to ensure the region that they habit is only inhabited by people who have the same beliefs and ideals as the aforementioned groups or parties. It also does not need to necessarily be through genocide but it can also be done through mass deportation (forcing people to move out of that region), typically against their own will. An example of this, although not in the MENA region, is the expulsion of the Greek minority from Turkey, and the expulsion of the Turkish minority from Greece in the 1920s, following the Greco-Turkish War. Something else that can be taken from this example is that this was an example of mutual ethnic cleansing (when 2 countries perform ethnic cleansing to each other). There is also something to be said about the relationship between genocide and ethnic cleansing and once again. This will be explored later in this report.

Ethnic cleansing isn't something that can be stopped in a day or two. It's a matter that will take extended periods of time to resolve seeing as the problem of ethnic cleansing is multifaceted. But it has been done with solutions such as the Dayton Agreement in 1995 which resolved the Bosnian War, a war which saw the attempted ethnic cleansing of religious groups in Bosnia, by establishing Bosnia and Herzegovina as a single, multi-ethnic state with power-sharing arrangements and the

establishment of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which was established after the Sierra Leone civil conflict (1991-2002) that saw many instances of ethnic and tribal violence, in order to prosecute war criminals during the crisis and helped bring a sense of justice and accountability. These examples highlight methods that can be taken in order to resolve such conflicts, mainly being the establishment of a new government, or a system to hold accountability. But what is required most is diplomacy, as this can ensure that a peaceful solution is reached without any unnecessary loss of life.

Definition of Key Terms

Ethnic Cleansing

While there is no official definition for ethnic cleansing by the United Nations, it is typically seen as the expulsion or genocide of members of either one or multiple ethnic/religious groups in a region in order to make said region ethnically homogenous. It can be done through genocide, forced displacement and migration, or even through destruction of cultural heritage.

Genocide

The United Nations has described genocide as the killing or serious harm of members of a group, transferring of children between groups, preventing a group from reproducing, or the making of a region inhospitable with the intent to destroy either a part of or entire national/ethnic group. Put simply, it's the deliberate killing of members of a group/nation with intent to destroy that group/nation.

The MENA Region

The Middle East and North Africa Region does not have a set in stone group of countries but typically, the countries that are in the MENA region are Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, West Bank and Gaza, and Yemen

Displacement

Displacement is described as the forced movement of a person or group of people out of their hometown, country, or region of residence due to external factors such as war and political conflict. This is also considered a form of ethnic cleansing seeing as it can be considered removing an ethnic group out of a country.

Refugee

A refugee is a person who has fled their country or home as a result of a war or conflict and has crossed international borders to find refuge/safety in another country. They can be considered victims of ethnic cleansing.

Ethnic Homogeneity

Ethnic homogeneity is when there is only one ethnicity or religion in a region and it can be considered a goal of ethnic cleansing.

Diplomacy

Diplomacy is the skill required in order to negotiate and manage relationships with other countries, normally by a country's representative. It can be used as a tool to create policies that help prevent ethnic cleansing and formulate solutions between opposing factions/parties.

Terrorism

Terrorism is defined as the unlawful use of violence and intimidation in order to further political aims and is typically conducted against civilians. It can be used as a tool for ethnic cleansing either by killing people or displacing them

IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons)

Similar to refugees, internally displaced persons are those who have been forced to flee their homes as a result of violence or conflict but the difference is that they stay within the country's borders. Once again, this is a form of ethnic cleansing but more on a regional level rather than national level.

Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage represents the lifestyles created by a community and is perpetuated across generations through traditions, locations, artefacts, creative creations, and monuments. Such cultural heritage tends to become targets for destruction as a means of ethnic cleansing to restrict the passing down of cultures to future generations as well as removing the binding force in some communities.

Dehumanisation and Propaganda

Dehumanisation is the process of depriving a certain group of human-like qualities in an attempt to rally a populus against an ethnic group to facilitate their oppression. Propaganda is information that may be purposefully misleading in order to achieve an objective like dehumanisation.

Nationalism

Nationalism is the ideology which emphasises the interests, pride, and identity of a particular nation or national group and involves a sense of loyalty which is accompanied by the belief that one's nation's interests and values should take precedence over those of other nations.

Ethnic Superiority

Ethnic superiority is the belief that a person's ethnicity/culture is better and more superior compared to other ethnicities and is often used as a reason for ethnic cleansing.

Key Issues

Forced displacement

The last 15 years itself has seen extreme numbers of refugees and enforced migration with the wars in Syria and Iraq contributing the most to these numbers, while Yemen, Libya, and Sudan have also had their fair share of refugees moving out

of the country due to conflict. The MENA region also saw an increase in the number of people displaced in the year 2021. 16 million people were displaced that year compared to the 15.8 million people displaced the previous year. In 2022, that number rose to 16.2 million. Looking at Syria itself, we can see that there were 5.7 million refugees from the country in neighbouring countries as well as about 6.9 million IDPs in 2021. The following year did see a reduction in the number of refugees and IDPs to 5.4 million and 6.8 million respectively but this does not discount the severity of the issue.

In the case of refugees out of the country, this brings another series of problems to the countries hosting those refugees (this is an issue not specific to the MENA region but to many countries across the world). Having to stay in a different country means that there will be cultural differences, language barriers, lack of space and resources, economic concerns, and racism can spark violence in such places which has the tendency to spiral into another major conflict. Furthermore, a country may not be capable of holding refugees and tends to become a problem for that country. Such problems are only exacerbated by internal political and economic dilemmas which can be seen using the example of Lebanon, which hosts 1.5 million Syrian refugees and 13,715 refugees of other nationalities. Already 80% of the Lebanese live in poverty with 36% below the extreme poverty line and the country is forced to host Syrian refugees of which 90% are living in poverty in that country. Not only does this strain Lebanon's resources but many Lebanese people are blaming the poor living conditions on the fact that the country hosts so many refugees. While being a means of ethnic cleansing, this also illustrates how forced displacement can cause problems to neighbouring countries as well. This has been shown above with the example of Syrian refugees moving to Lebanon but it has also happened in Jordan, the country which hosts more than 2 million registered Palestinian refugees, the most number of Palestinian refugees hosted in one country. As a result of having so many refugees, the total population of Jordan is about 11.1 million and the government struggles to provide equal opportunity to all the people in the country especially because most of the Palestinian refugees have received Jordanian citizenship meaning that they are

obliged to receive equal opportunity just like any other Jordanian. Having to provide healthcare services, access to education, and equal job opportunities placed a massive economic strain on the Jordanian government. Even with support from the UNRWA, a lack of funding for them makes it difficult for them to provide much assistance. Furthermore, there has also been social and political tensions that have arisen from conflict between Jordanians and Palestinians and this tension can be observed during the 2002 Passport Revocation Crisis and Black September in 1970 which saw conflict between the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) and the Jordanian government. The MENA region with states that are already so volatile has its problems exacerbated when there is an influx of people into a state in the region. With refugees in a country, it only worsens existing social tensions, economic and political instability, and serves to open up new problems for the state.

Destruction of cultural heritage

The destruction of cultural heritage is a means of ethnic cleansing and it is a method used to eliminate a culture's presence in an area. The intent is to destroy monuments that act as a centre point for communities to rally around and those that define a group of people as these are the structures that assist in social cohesion. Their destruction can put a group into disarray and force them to relocate for the conditions of the deeply rooted society are often disrupted. As a result, this can affect a group psychologically in the sense that they've lost a sort of connection to their roots which does force them to again, move out of a certain area. It acts as a way of undermining resistance because the symbol of a culture has been destroyed and there might be the fear that should resistance arise, more monuments are put at risk. Furthermore, this can act as a means of preventing future generations from learning about said culture, essentially halting the passing of the culture which can lead to its extinction. The case can also be made that the destruction of these monuments is not only disastrous to the culture it is associated with but to humanity as a whole. The opportunity to establish connections with distant societies and immerse ourselves in their cultures remains possible through means such as exploring cultural landmarks, and delving into original texts. When these cultural landmarks are destroyed, we forfeit this chance.

This destruction of cultural heritage can occur unintentionally during conflict but is done purposefully as a means of ethnic cleansing as seen when ISIS in the summer of 2015 started destroying ancient structures in the historic city of Palmyra including demolishing the 2000-year old Temple of Baalshamin. This was all in an effort to get rid of any monument or artefact that differed from their interpretation of Islam. The group believed that such monuments posed a threat to the caliphate they believed superior. And they committed similar acts in the same year such as the tearing down of the Mosul Museum and Libraries, the Mar Elian Monastery, the Mar Behnam Monastery among others. Another example of such cultural heritage destruction happening is during the ongoing Sudanese conflict (Sudan, although not strictly part of MENA, is often associated with the region). This conflict has seen both targeted and collateral damage to its cultural heritage. In 2023, archives of the “Mohamed Omer Bashir” Center for Sudan Studies at Omdurman Ahlia University in the capital city Khartoum were lost in a fire. The Omdurman Old Market in the capital was destroyed by fires and looting occurred at the Abdul Karim Mirghani Center, which accommodated a theatre, library, a publishing centre, as well as an archive of audio-visual materials. And it wasn't only the capital which saw damage but also other regions of the country such as Darfur which has seen its share of violence and destruction. The destruction of all this cultural heritage puts at risk the culture and history of Sudan which, if not properly safeguarded, could lead to the endangerment and complete extinction of Sudanese culture. Sudan isn't just an isolated incident. The deliberate destruction of cultural monuments is a common element in numerous ethnic cleansing campaigns in the MENA region, an area renowned for its rich and diverse heritage, as highlighted through the actions of ISIS in Syria and Iraq and groups in Sudan but also in Yemen with the damaging of the Old City of Sana'a and in Libya with the destruction of the ancient city of Sabratha. These monuments, which serve as living testimonials to the region's historical and cultural legacy, are often targeted in a concerted effort to erase every trace of the existing culture.

Culture endangerment and/or extinction

A direct consequence of ethnic cleansing is the risk of a culture becoming endangered or even going extinct. This arises from the simple fact that cultural cleansing's entailment of both the direct genocide of members of a culture and the destruction of any heritage related to that culture means that not only is culture being directly extinguished through direct killings of the culture's people but also preventing future generations or interested parties from getting to know and inherit that culture seeing as associated material to said culture has been destroyed. As a result of all this, a culture tends to become endangered and depending on the scale, the culture can become extinct. This isn't ideal for many reasons and a primary reason would be that the world loses a source of cultural diversity. Every culture is a gold mine for human history, knowledge, art, and traditions, and such factors can be beneficial to society for it gives us more perspectives on matters and encourages innovation and creativity. Losing a culture therefore bars these different perspectives and could hinder potential developments that may be beneficial to society.

An example of cultural extinction is, although not in the MENA region, the extinction of the Tasmanian Indigenous people in the 19th century when the British settled in Tasmania in 1803 where there were about 4,000 to 7,000 Indigenous Tasmanians residing in the region. There was little to no consideration for the rights of indigenous people in the area which resulted in crimes occurring against the Tasmanians often going unpunished. The British forcefully resettled the Native Tasmanians to a different island but violence and disease resulted in the population slowly dying out and by 1847, only 147 Tasmanians remained. And in 1876, the last full-blooded indigenous Tasmanian passed away resulting in the extinction of the culture and as a result, a source of diversity, art, and possible innovation was lost. We can also see examples of cultural extinction and endangerment in ancient Iraq with the extinction of the Sumerians at the end of the 2nd millennium BCE as a result of invasion by the Elamites, the endangerment of the American Indigenous people through their resettlement and forced assimilation, extinction of the Carthaginian

culture, and endangerment of the Kalash culture in Pakistan among others. The MENA region has a pool of different cultures and each of its approximate 20 countries is home to a wide variety of different cultures and ethnicities. However the region has seen loss of culture albeit on a more historical level rather than recent. This has been seen through extinction of the Phoenicians who inhabited present-day Lebanon and Syria and were wiped out by Alexander the Great and the Persians who destroyed their 2 most important cities Sidon and Tyre during the dawn of the 4th century BCE as well as the extinction of the Nabateans who occupied modern-day Jordan and Saudi Arabia and were annexed by the Romans in 106 CE. However, looking at this through a more modern lens, there do exist cultures that aren't extinct but run the risk of getting extinct such as Kurdish culture in certain regions, as well as the Assyrian culture. Losing these cultures could result in a multitude of problems including the hampering of progress to solving global problems as many of these problems require a holistic approach to solve which benefits from having a variety of viewpoints, a weakened social fabric as culture can act as a binding force for people while its loss leads to fragmentation and disconnection among individuals which could have consequences on mental well-being, and reduced cultural exchange which is not ideal as cultural exchange and intercultural dialogue contribute to mutual understanding and global peace.

Impact on economies as a result of ethnic cleansing

Ethnic cleansing is a problem that entails a tremendous loss of human life but it is also important to consider the economic effects of ethnic cleansing. The intense conflicts occurring in the MENA region along with the huge amounts of displacement has not only caused numerous deaths but has also had economic repercussions such as deep recessions, increased inflation, worsened fiscal and financial positions, and damaged institutions. There has also been conflict spillover into neighbouring countries and to varying degrees, these countries face large numbers of refugees, weak confidence and security, and declining social cohesion that undermines the quality of institutions and their ability to undertake much-needed economic reforms. The economic repercussions of these conflicts include the disruption of local economies

considering communities are forced to move while business are destroyed, reduced human capital due to the loss of life as well as displacement of skilled workers, decreased foreign investment as companies would be deterred from investing into an unstable country considering the high risk, as well as increased cost of humanitarian assistance with these costs putting strain on the budgets and economies of the countries that provide such support.

The recent conflicts in the MENA region have cut economic growth with GDP in Syria in 2015 being less than half of the pre-conflict level in 2010. 2015 also saw a loss of 25 to 35 percent of Yemen's GDP while Libya's GDP fell by 24 percent in 2014. Along with slashes in economic growth, these conflicts have led to high inflation with Iraq's inflation increasing to 30 percent in the mid-2000s while Yemen and Libya saw an inflation increase rate of more than 15 percent. In most cases, these patterns of inflation are coupled with significant depreciation pressures on domestic currencies, which the authorities might seek to counter through extensive interventions and the control of cross-border capital movements. And on the point of conflict spillover, the conflicts in Syria and Iraq slowed down economic growth in Jordan by 1 percent while their inflation accelerated in 2014 to 4.6 percent, from 3.4 percent in 2013. This can be attributed to the country's large refugee population and a limited short-term supply response. Lebanon experienced trends, with its GDP growth decelerating to 2.8 percent in 2012 and 2.5 percent in 2013, down from an average of 9 percent during the period of 2007–2010.

Major Parties Involved

Syrian Arab Republic

Syria is a land that is no stranger to conflict. There has been a civil war in the country since 2011, and this conflict arose from the people's displeasure with how the government was running the country with its high unemployment levels, widespread corruption, and lack of political freedom. This resulted in the people starting peaceful protests but these protests were met with immediate opposition from the government,

who used force to quash those protests which resulted in more protests and eventually a brutal war arose.

As a result of this conflict, about 11 million people have fled the country and have taken refuge in other countries, including Turkey and Lebanon. However, Syrians in those countries face extreme violence leading to their genocide, what can be considered a form of ethnic cleansing. This is seen especially in Turkey whose military has shelled and extrajudicially killed Syrians in their territories as well as ensuring that certain regions they occupy are only populated by Turkish and Arab families which helps create ethnic homogeneity.

Within Syria itself are tensions among its heterogeneous population. Key ethnic and religious groups within the country include the Arab-Sunni, Kurdish Sunni, Arab-Alawites, and Greek Orthodox Christians, among others. These groups have been entangled in a web of disputes and rivalries that have at times led to violence and even acts of genocide. These conflicts, fueled by historical grievances, power struggles, and sectarian divisions, have contributed to the protracted Syrian Civil War, a devastating conflict that has inflicted immense suffering upon the country's population as well as the ethnic cleansing seen within the country.

Most efforts that have been put in place to assist oppressed groups have come from abroad and not from within the country or its government. There has been humanitarian assistance from various countries and organisations including the United Nations who collaborated with over 200 humanitarian partners to provide assistance to the country and the UN Syria Humanitarian Fund was established in 2014 to assist in funding humanitarian operations for the country. In 2022, the UNHCR distributed \$208.5 million in cash assistance to around 3.5 million vulnerable Syrian refugees. The EU mobilised more than €30 billion in humanitarian, development, economic and stabilisation assistance for the country.

Islamic Republic of Iran

Iran is a nation with a diverse range of ethnic groups, including Azeris, Arabs, Kurds, Balochis, and numerous other communities. While the non-Persian ethnic groups constitute a substantial portion of Iran's population, they have faced historical challenges in achieving equal rights and representation within the Iranian state. The country's discriminatory policies against these groups have sparked concerns. According to some estimates, non-Persian ethnic groups make up roughly 50 percent of Iran's population, yet they often experience marginalisation. Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran has seen the harsh prosecution of ethnic Arabs, Kurds, and Balochis by regime security forces, as well as other minority groups.

One significant aspect of this discrimination is the suppression of native languages and cultures. Iran has imposed restrictions on the use of native languages in education and public life, furthering divisions. Ethnic minorities have also faced economic neglect, with underinvestment in regions predominantly inhabited by these groups. This neglect contributes to disparities in employment opportunities and overall quality of life. Reports of human rights abuses, such as arbitrary arrests, torture, and extrajudicial killings, have also raised concerns about Iran's treatment of ethnic minorities.

The Iranian government policies concerning ethnic minorities have stirred apprehensions about their potential impact on the country's attempts to have ethnic homogeneity. While the government says that they want to achieve national unity, their previous actions do not suggest that they truly believe in that idea. And as a result, there exists a necessity for increased acknowledgment and safeguarding of the rights held by ethnic and religious minority groups in Iran. The support being given to refugees and minorities is coming from the international community and not from the Iranian government. Within the Islamic Republic of Iran, the United Nations is represented by 20 resident and non-resident agencies, funds, and specialised programs. These entities conduct their activities in accordance with their designated roles and functions. In 2022, the European Union designated €11 million for

humanitarian aid to support the most susceptible individuals in Iran, contributing to a EU humanitarian assistance of €92.3 million since 2016.

Republic of Lebanon

Lebanon isn't a country that has seen ethnic cleansing, rather it is a country that has taken in many refugees from various different countries, mainly from Syria seeing as the country hosts approximately 1.5 million Syrian refugees with 13,715 refugees from other countries. The country is home to the largest number of refugees per capita in the world which is one out of eight refugees which can be attributed to the fact that Lebanon is in close proximity to Syria.

But while Lebanon does hold many refugees, it does not necessarily mean that the country is equipped to hold that many refugees. The country has seen an economic meltdown, is affected by the pandemic, as well as a slowly weakening government which cannot reform or even request for assistance. Between 2019 and 2020, the country's poverty greatly increased to about 23 percent with about 841,000 Lebanese being below the food poverty line. And yet, the country is hosting refugees and the Sunni Syrians account for 20 percent of Lebanon's population which has generated high levels of animosity among the local Lebanese people against the Syrians. An estimated 90 percent of Syrian refugee households live in extreme poverty, an increase of 55 percent from the previous year and they're living on less than half the minimum wage of the country. In December 2020, 50 percent of Syrian households were suffering from food insecurity, a doubling since 2019. This goes to show that the country is struggling to provide for its refugees but also its own people which puts forward the question whether the country should continue hosting refugees displaced from Syria.

The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant/ The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIL/ISIS)

ISIS is an internationally known terrorist organisation that arose from the remnants of Al Qaeda in Iraq and although slowly fading since 2007, it re-emerged in

2011 and took advantage of the political instability in Syria and Iraq in order to grow its ranks. The group is referred to as extremists of Islam (Islamists/Jihadists). ISIS follows an apocalyptic ideology, anticipating the imminent arrival of the Mahdi, also known as the "guided one," to restore and redeem Islam. They have declared a holy war, or jihad, against all non-believers.

They are infamous for their actions in the MENA region and one such action is their ethnic cleansing of various religious groups. In the summer of 2014, the organisation targeted both the Christian and Yazidi groups of both Shingal and Nineveh along with a host of other people from different ethnicities. Hundreds of thousands of people fled the country in order to escape the threat of enslavement, forced conversion, and death. It is believed that about 10,000 Yazidis were murdered and thousands of girls and women were enslaved in a matter of days. They massacred 600 Shia prisoners after capturing Mosul in June of 2014. In 2017, they participated in the Kurdish Genocides.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The UNHCR is a body that protects people who are forced to leave their native regions as well as those who are stateless. They provide crucial assistance and protection during crises, advocate for enhanced asylum laws and systems that grant displaced individuals their rights, and facilitate trying to get durable solutions, enabling them to either safely return to their homes or establish a new life in a different nation. Furthermore, they make sure that stateless people are given a nationality to allow them to obtain basic rights.

The UNHCR keeps track of regions where ethnic cleansing occurs and champions for advocacy and diplomacy as seen during their involvement in the Bosnian War in the 1990s where, while not the primary force for stopping the war, certainly assisted in its ending. Furthermore, they provided humanitarian assistance to those who were forcefully displaced by offering them protection and creating safe zones for them. They performed similar actions in Sudan with regards to the Darfur

conflict in the 2000s, Rwanda with regards to offering assistance to IDPs and refugees after the genocide in 1994, as well as the ongoing Rohingya crisis in Myanmar where they are providing assistance to the displaced Rohingya population.

Amnesty International

Amnesty International is a non-governmental organisation that operates internationally with the aim of protecting human rights. It was founded in London in 1961, and their objective is to conduct research and take action aimed at preventing and putting an end to serious violations of rights pertaining to physical and mental well-being, freedom of conscience and expression, and protection against discrimination. This mission is carried out within the framework of their efforts to advocate for the full spectrum of human rights.

Their work includes documentation and reporting of conflicts and instances of ethnic cleansing which can be seen through their report on ethnic cleansing in Myanmar published on August 26th, 2023 and more MENA specific examples like their report on Israel's apartheid against Palestinians released on February 1st, 2022, and their report on Iran's oppression of the Kurdish minority; raising awareness which is done through the use of these aforementioned reports to highlight the facts and atrocities committed like seen in their media campaigns that raised awareness about ethnic cleansing of the Yazidis by ISIS in both Syria and Iraq; and advocacy and lobbying to influence the action of governments, companies and decision-makers as well as collaboration with other organisation like the Human Rights Watch as well as NGOs like the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), The Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC) which is a global network of NGOs working to strengthen international cooperation with the International Criminal Court, and the Control Arms Coalition, a global alliance of NGOs campaigning for stronger international controls on the arms trade.

Human Rights Watch

The Human Rights Watch is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation dedicated to human rights, comprising over 275 staff members worldwide. Its team is composed of human rights professionals, including country specialists, legal experts, journalists, and academics with diverse backgrounds and nationalities. It was established in 1978 by co-founders Robert L. Bernstein, Jeri Laber, and Aryeh Neier with the aim of investigating and reporting on all the abuses that happen in the world and work to protect those who are most at risk such as vulnerable minorities, refugees, and children in need. Their advocacy is directed towards governments, armed groups and businesses, pushing them to change laws, policies and practices and they refuse government funding.

Their work revolves around research, similar to Amnesty International, and they investigate, expose, and change. This can be seen through their documentation on the war crimes in Syria where they wrote about the chemical weapons used to attack civilians, as well as their detailed accounts on ethnic cleansing in Ethiopia emphasising the war crimes committed in the Western Tigray region which can be seen through their many reports and articles on the conflict. And in a similar vein to Amnesty International, they also collaborate with other organisations to further change which can be seen through their collaboration with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights which helped them in their efforts to address human rights violations on a regional scale. The Human Rights Watch also works with the United Nations and some of their previous collaborations include the discussion between the UNHRC, UNHCR, and HRW on the HRW's report on the human rights situation in the Philippines along with the HRW's participation in UN special procedures.

Development of Issue/Timeline

Date	Event	Outcome
1914 - 1923	The Assyrian Genocide	This event occurred as a result of the Assyrians' hatred of anti-Christians as well as both their

		<p>previous history and wanting to become independent from the Ottoman Empire. This resulted in the Ottoman Empire committing a mass genocide against the Assyrians which saw the death of between 250,000 and 500,000 Assyrians as well 350,000 Greeks as well as hundreds of thousands of displaced people. There were also Assyrians who were deported and their movement through the desert saw many of them die from starvation and disease.</p>
1986 - 1989	The Anfal Campaign	<p>The Anfal Campaign was a widespread massacre against the Kurdish people of Northern Iraq, an ethnic group that has constantly been fighting for either independence or even meaningful autonomy, by the Ba'ath Arab Socialist Party. The campaign saw the massacre of between 50,000 and 100,000 Kurds with about 2,000 villages being completely decimated and women and children just disappearing. The destruction of villages saw looting of both riches and livestock and many of the native villagers were forcefully displaced. There was also widespread use of chemical weapons used in villages killing countless numbers of women and children.</p>
2003 - 2020	The Darfur Conflict	<p>This conflict occurred in Sudan and some people from the Fur, Zaghawa, and Masalit groups in Darfur joined together to form the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) to gain more control over their lives. Later, another group called the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) also joined them. The</p>

		Sudanese government responded by training local residents to form violent, semi-professional militias called the Janjaweed and were tasked with attacking the aforementioned villages. Between 2003 and 2005 itself, about 200,000 civilians died from brutal attacks, disease, and starvation in Darfur.
2014	The Yazidi Genocide	The Yazidi Genocide was performed by ISIS in their efforts to eradicate any group that didn't align with their views. This genocide occurred in Sinjar, Northern Iraq and saw the death of about 5,000 Yazidis with 7,000 Yazidi women and girls being enslaved and forcibly transferred to locations in Iraq and eastern Syria. This also displaced hundreds of thousands of Yazidis who fled to Mount Sinjar and were stuck there for days without access to food or water, with many perishing as a result.
2011 - Present	The Syrian Civil War	The Syrian Civil War is an ongoing conflict that has seen millions of Syrians displaced both internally as well as refugees leaving the country as a result of the various conflicts between the many ethnic groups in the country. At the end of 2022, there were about 5.4 million refugees and 6.8 million IDPs as well as 160,000 stateless persons.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Documentation of instances of ethnic cleansing

Most of the documentation of the actions committed by governments and extra-governmental organisations are documented by various sources like the UN and

bodies related to the United Nations as well as government websites. This can be seen in the UNHCR's active documentation of the various statistics with regards to the number of people who are displaced, the number of refugees, the countries in which refugees are found in, and more in countries like Syria, Lebanon, Sudan, and more. There are also various news organisations who regularly document what happens in countries, and illustrate the magnitude and impact of any atrocity performed.

There are various reasons for this documentation and it's useful to keep track of such events. This assists in efforts by illustrating regions that need assistance and can help organisations direct their efforts to the places in need. Additionally, such documentation can be used in order to raise awareness about the issue and help get people informed about these matters. This can help rally people to support the organisations by donating or spreading the word which helps improve the effectiveness of such organisations.

Examples of such documentation include the UNHCR's documentation on the Syria situation where they have kept track about the number of refugees in neighbouring countries (5.4 million), IDPs (6.8 million), refugee returns in 2022 alone (51,300), IDP returns (255,100), and stateless persons (160,000) in the year 2022; Amnesty International's documentation on the human rights abuses against the Kurdish minority where they go into detail highlighting the different ways through which they are oppressed (through religion and culture, employment, education, housing) as well as the double oppression faced by Kurdish women and how people are targeted for speaking out; and the Human Rights Watch's documentation on the Anfal Campaign against the Kurds in Iraq which detailed the campaign and methods used to eliminate the Kurdish people. These reports help highlight the significance of the problem and bring to light atrocities committed that might have never seen the light of day, helping the public understand the magnitude of these problems and why immediate action is required.

Provision of humanitarian assistance both from the UN and NGOs

Humanitarian assistance has been one of the most effective ways to assist those who have been affected by ethnic cleansing campaigns, specifically campaigns that saw the use of forced displacement. The provision of humanitarian assistance entails actions such as emergency food aid, provision of shelters and housing, healthcare, general protection and creation of safe zones, as well as in some cases, education and psychosocial support. Such assistance is provided both by governmental and non-governmental organisations who can afford to provide such support.

The UNHCR has provided humanitarian assistance during various conflicts that saw ethnic cleansing (examples were mentioned in Major Parties). The United States of America is also a major contributor to humanitarian assistance through its various governmental organisations like USAID ((United States Agency for International Development). An example of their contributions is their provision of \$116 million to assist those vulnerable populations affected in Burma, Bangladesh, and that region with more than \$74 million to support the Rohingya refugees. The International Committee of the Red Cross is an example of an NGO that has provided support to migrants and displaced people in many regions across the world including the MENA region. Their recent collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) resulted in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen the capacity of National Societies and to ensure coordinated action to provide basic assistance services to migrants, including displaced people and communities in the MENA Region. And we've seen a lot more examples such as the World Food Programme providing food and nutrition to those displaced in South Sudan, the Doctors Without Borders or Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) provision of healthcare services in Yemen with an expenditure of €115 million to assist more than 108,000 patients, as well as the International Rescue Committee who support Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians in which they have helped more than 120,000 people.

Implementation of specific agreements, and policies

In order to prevent ethnic cleansing through its many forms, it is necessary to become aware of the risks and take action in order to both address, reduce, and eradicate them. The matter of preventing such crimes is something that requires a sustained effort over a period of time and this sustenance can be obtained through the implementation of legitimate and accountable national institutions and more importantly, laws and policies that aim to protect human rights. In consequence, policies such as those of the Convention on Genocide Prevention and Punishment, the 1949 Geneva Conventions, and international human rights law treaties have been implemented that require Member States to prevent these crimes or violations, including by ensuring that the norms contained in them are respected.

Other policies and organisations include the ECOWAS Prevention Framework which is a policy used to strengthen human security in the West African region and encourages the use of regional military forces to prevent and respond to crises related to ethnic or religious tensions and was created on 1999, the Dayton Agreement which ended the Bosnian War through ensuring a power sharing agreement between the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska and prevented further ethnic conflict and cleansing and was implemented in 1995, the Ohrid Framework Agreement was signed in 2001 and aimed to address ethnic tensions between Macedonians and Albanians and improved the voice of Albanians helping prevent further ethnic conflict, and, although not a policy, the creation of the Gacaca Courts in the aftermath of 1994 Rwandan Genocide that helped prosecute perpetrators of the conflict and ethnic cleansing, allowing the Rwandans to feel a sense of justice. These are just a few policies implemented to prevent ethnic cleansing and its problems

Possible Solutions

Creating policies that are specific to the MENA region

While policies have been created that address ethnic cleansing or problems that are related to ethnic cleansing, there haven't been policies created that directly address the problem in the MENA region. The MENA region's issues that relate to ethnic cleansing are somewhat unique and can be considered more harsh due to the extreme

climate of the area with blistering heat, lack of food and water, and inhospitable land that is hard to farm or harvest in. There needs to be policies created that address the specific challenges that are posed by the MENA region and bolster the plight of ethnic and religious groups that are ethnically cleansed. There is the requirement to create policies that can cater to certain countries in the MENA region due to unique circumstances not only because of the weather conditions but also the involvement of terrorist groups that proliferate ethnic cleansing as seen in ethnic cleansing campaigns in Syria and Iraq. Although ethnic cleansing does occur in the region, the magnitude as well as methods used can vary from country to country and even region to region in a state. All these must be taken into account when drafting such policies. These policies also need to be created and implemented as soon as possible in order to deal with the problem immediately to prevent the issue from growing larger and to prevent the loss of life from increasing.

Increased awareness for the problem

Although mentioned earlier about how documentation helps raise awareness, a lot of this documentation tends to be more general and any awareness that does come out of it is more about the loss of life rather than ethnic cleansing and the loss of a culture. As a result, it might be beneficial to create organisations or policies that promote the importance of ethnicities to the public and the value of a culture and how such cultures can be beneficial to the global society. By highlighting the positives of ethnicities and cultures, the public will gain more knowledge about the matter and as a result, they would be inclined to rally against ethnic cleansing campaigns seeing as they have context for why ethnic cleansing is such a bad thing. The public is a powerful force not only through the voice they have but also the potential financial backing that can be provided for humanitarian and relief efforts as well as the possible development of safe spaces and zones. The effectiveness of awareness was discussed earlier in the report as well.

Creation of a body that facilitated peace talks and negotiation

Diplomacy should always be the first choice when it comes to attempts of resolving conflicts. Unlike force and military action, diplomacy does not entail the loss of life which should always be the aim when it comes to the resolution of a conflict. As such, it may be effective to create a body that facilitates diplomacy. Such a body would have to be created by the United Nations and be supported by larger nations including the United States of America, India, United Kingdom, China, and other large powerful nations. This would improve its power and effectiveness as well as offer greater funding which can facilitate the growth of this body. Furthermore, the body can only operate in more neutral countries considering these countries are seen as unbiased as well as helping avoid diplomatic tensions. This should be the go-to solution and as a result, should be established as soon as possible in order to reduce the loss of life. Only if talks in this body fails can more drastic action such as military force be taken.

Intervention by the UN and member states with the use of military action

A more extreme solution that could be implemented is the UN as well as large member states like the US and France intervening in regions that are seeing ethnic cleansing and using force to suppress the the parties that are performing such ethnic cleansing. Such intervention can include the deployment of a regiment of a few thousand troops to take arms against organisations performing ethnic cleansing. This ensures the immediate protection of ethnic minorities and considering the size and power of the UN and large member states, such quashing of ethnic cleansing regimes can occur quickly and efficiently thus stopping those campaigns. But the usage of such a regiment should only be implemented only if diplomacy and peace talks completely break down and regions of extreme corruption, political instability, and where extreme genocide is occurring. However, this does bring a multitude of other problems such as reform after the intervention as well as breach of international conventions. While effective, the aftermath might be an even larger problem.

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