

Forum: HRC 2

Issue: Eliminating all forms of religious intolerance

Student Officer: Christophe Cannon

Position: Deputy President



Introduction

Religious intolerance is one of the greatest dividing factors found in modern society. It splits parts of countries from each other and can cause major wars and civil wars that can kill thousands of people. They usually bring large amounts of violence and torture because of the inherent hatred of the other group. Religious intolerance is the major cause of this, and the belief that one religion, your religion is the best and more importantly correct religion among them.

Religious intolerance across the globe divides people and causes acts of great violence and hate as well as horrific mass genocides that spur from a lack of understanding and a fear of difference. There are many modern examples of religious intolerance in the modern world present across most of the globe. Such as the Israel-Palestine conflict, abortion rights or increasing religious discrimination in nations today. There are many demonstrations against abortion clinics and some nations and states have banned abortion completely and see it as an assault on religion.

There are also major land disputes over the owning of religious areas and the right to freedom for people such as currently in Israel. The growing war in Israel/Palestine has already killed over 15000 individuals (At the time of writing) and will continue to kill more if a peaceful resolution that pleases both sides is not found. The UN has tried to intervene before to secure armastices and find a peaceful resolution however no proposed solution so far has found both groups in agreement on a fair deal, and a solution is in dire need so that no more innocent civilians lose their lives.

With the current conflicts in the world including Israel, Palestine and Russia, Ukraine there are many refugees seeking asylum from the conflicts in their home nations. However sometimes refugees with different ethnic beliefs and religions can be socially isolated and discriminated against in the nations they arrive in which leads to them not being able to find jobs, sufficient schooling if they have or are children and basic needs like housing and food. Fundamental human rights which some refugees do not always have access to.

Across the globe, many people lack fundamental human rights because of religious intolerance which can both hurt refugees fleeing religious conflict as well as starting religious conflicts eliminating religious

intolerance can help people across the globe. In protecting their human rights.

Definition of Key Terms

Excommunication

“Excommunication is, a form of ecclesiastical censure by which a person is excluded from the communion of believers, the rites or sacraments of a church, and the rights of church membership but not necessarily from membership in the church as such. Some method of exclusion belongs to the administration of all Christian churches and denominations, indeed of all religious communities. Roman Catholicism distinguishes between two kinds of ex-communication: that which renders a person *toleratus*, tolerated, and that which renders a person *vitandus*, one who is to be avoided. The second and more severe form requires—except for certain crimes that incur it automatically—that the culprit be announced by name in public as *vitandus*, in most cases by the Holy See itself; this is reserved for the gravest offences.” (Britannica)

Crusade

A war based specifically on a religious policy or war for a religious area. The Crusades are often referred to as a series of religious wars to take hold of the city of Jerusalem that started in 1097 and were fought on and off for the considerable part of the next hundred years. These wars were generally inconclusive in terms of a victor and the city of Jerusalem changed hands many times during these wars.

Discrimination

Discrimination is the unjust and prejudiced targeting of a specific person or group based on any particular feature of their being. Discrimination is commonly used to target people of a specific sex, age, sexual identity, or disability. Discrimination directly goes against the UN's (United Nations) Human Rights.

Religion

Religion is human beings' relation to that which they regard as holy, sacred, absolute, spiritual, divine, or worthy of special reverence. It is also commonly regarded as consisting of the way people deal with ultimate concerns about their lives and their fate after death. A religion requires at least 3 members and generally has an important religious place(s), object(s) and ritual(s).(Britannica)

Asylum Seeker

“An asylum-seeker is someone whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed. Every year, around one million individuals seek asylum. Individuals or groups usually seek asylum if they are being prosecuted in their home country for a reason protected by human rights. National asylum systems are in place to determine who qualifies for international protection. However, during mass movements of refugees, usually as a result of conflict or violence, it is not always possible or necessary to conduct

individual interviews with every asylum seeker who crosses a border. These groups are often called 'prima facie' refugees."(UNHRC)

Background Information

Sub-topic 1: Tackling religiously motivated acts of violence

Random acts of violence are horrific events, however, when they are targeted at specific religious groups it is distinctly worse as it implicitly means that an individual wishes for a religion to die and to kill all members. This is religious intolerance taken to the absolute extreme. In order to try and contribute to the destruction of the freedom of religion and human rights.

Religiously motivated acts of violence have been around for a very long time. Religiously motivated acts of violence are often related to conflict over religious areas or conflict between religions in a nation. The first major religious split was the split between Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Western Catholic Christianity. The split between these two came in 1054 after many years of disagreements between both churches. The (now) Eastern Orthodox church based lots of its roots on Greek philosophy while the catholic church based lots of its understandings on Roman and Latin beliefs which started numerous differences in the practice of a single church of which many changes were made to ceremonies based on each belief. This led to a final massive division between the two churches as Pope Leo IX excommunicated the leader of the eastern church Michael Cerularius which was shortly followed by the excommunication of Leo IX by Michael Cerularius. These excommunications of the faiths were kept for a very very long period of time only being undone by the leaders of both churches in 1965. The Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church are currently in good relations with each other.

The other prominent conflict is between Catholicism and Protestantism. This conflict originated with the creation of Protestantism in 1517 and the reformation of the catholic church. The Reformation began after Martin Luther nailed the 95 Theses to the door of the church. With the creation of the printing press and the immediate popularity of these theses, they were spread incredibly quickly across Europe at the time as they promised more money to the individual and took the gift of heaven away from the church and to god directly giving individuals more autonomy in their own life. These ideas completely took over Germany in terms of popularity and resulted in the German states backing Luther religiously. The pope excommunicated Luther and demanded he recants his statements, however, he would not recant. The Catholic church then demanded that Luther be given to Rome for punishment, which was also rejected. The German states decided to hold a trial in the city of Worms, where both Luther would be able to state and defend his case while the leaders of the Roman Catholic church

would be able to state theirs. The Diet of Worms required a unanimous vote to either sentence Luther to death or embrace his ideals of the Holy Roman Empire. The emperor Charles V at the time who presided over the debate was a devout catholic and did everything in his power to sentence Luther to death. However, the debate eventually proved inconclusive with both sides roughly equal in favour and against Luther with neither willing to give up their opinions to the other. With no conclusive ending to the Diet Luther was allowed to go free back to his home town after which the effects of his statements would shake the religious scene of Europe. The majority of the land above the area of the diet began to follow Lutheranism as three organised religions and his actions sparked many more reformers to create new religions based on their guiding principles. Many different religions were created and the major ones created were. Protestantism, Calvinist and The Church of England. Through this reformation, there are still many disputes between the religious groups involved that lead to mass violence and genocide. An example of the largest conflicts based on religion is the 30 years of war fought between Protestantism and Catholicism that eventually led to the re-reformation of Bohemia into a catholic state. The war is estimated to have killed anywhere between 4.5 million to 8 million civilians and soldiers.

Another instance of a conflict based on religious grounds that has killed many people is the battle over Abortion rights as many Christians see it as the killing of unborn children and thus murder. After the landmark case brought before the Supreme Court in Roe Vs Wade was passed in favour of abortion. However, this only marked an Uphill battle for abortion rights as many states would go on to pass anti-abortion laws which made abortion more difficult or made it very difficult for poorer members of society to get abortions. These bills were supported by far-right religious groups who also protested outside of clinics and went further to extreme measures to kill doctors providing abortions such as Dr Barnett Slepian, or completely nail bombing an abortion clinic in order to try and scare individuals away from using abortion clinics.



There are many widespread examples of how religious intolerance has led to mass genocide or conflicts between religious groups. There are many other examples. Such as intolerance for LGBTQ+

communities, many other historical wars between different religions such as the crusades or the state of Israel, (See Sub-Topic 3 Background) or school shootings because of a school's religion. Religiously motivated acts of violence take many shapes and forms which should be eliminated.

Sub-topic 2: Protecting the right to asylum for religious groups and their rights in the nations they seek asylum within

Being a refugee is a very difficult process for both the refugees, the land they travel through, and the land they eventually settle in. They can be denied access across borders and denied the right to asylum that they are implicitly owed. When refugees settle in a nation the process is very difficult for both them and a host nation taking on lots of refugees.

One major example of wars that have been fought on religious grounds is the Bosnian Civil War. The war resulted in a significant number of refugees with diverse religious beliefs. The conflict began after the state of Bosnia declared independence from the Republic of Yugoslavia. Bosnia declared independence because of the large religious difference compared to the rest of the nation. The new country of Bosnia had a majority of Bosniaks, a mainly Muslim group. This declaration of independence led to a massive war which killed over 100,000 people, of whom mainly were Bosniaks. This obviously led to a large migration of refugees across Europe and the repercussions are still being felt today with many refugee camps across Europe still harbouring refugees from the conflict roughly 3 decades ago. The conditions in these camps are still described as without water, temporary tents to sleep in and inadequate food. However, the immediate effects after the war displaced hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing across Europe. Most of these refugees are of Muslim descent. As so many refugees have been displaced it makes it harder for refugees to find jobs in the countries they arrived in. As many news outlets make profit over having the most important news and important news the amount of refugees was exaggerated and led to a mistrust of refugees overall. This made it far harder for refugees to find jobs in host nations because priority was given mainly to citizens with citizenship. With less chance of receiving jobs refugees were less likely to receive an income in order to rent or buy a home. However, even refugees who were able to make an income were sometimes discriminated against in buying and renting houses because of their perceived danger of refugees of a different faith making integration into communities far harder. The discrimination that religious refugees also face extends to a perception of power over refugees as they are often overlooked by legal systems making it difficult for them to fight against unfair treatment and other crimes locking them into communities of other refugees. This is why there are still refugee camps for the Bosnian War.

The unfair and discriminatory treatment of refugees is one of the largest issues in the modern world with 36.4 Million refugees in the world and over 110 Million Forcibly displaced persons worldwide. The issue of protecting the rights of individuals once they reach host nations is important as most

individuals are affected by it overall.

Sub-topic 3: Providing peaceful solutions to regions with religious land disputes

Many regions around the globe have or are involved in conflicts based on the importance of holy cities for their religion. Indeed this is very apparent in the current conflict in the Middle East. The conflict of religious sites is very old however and explains how modern conflicts today have developed.

The first major agreed-upon religious war was the first crusade which took place from (1095-1102) and involved Pope Urban II declaring a crusade for the holy lands during the council of Clermont. Pope Urban II then went around France for the rest of the year preaching the fact that the holy lands were being defiled and that followers of Christianity persecuted and attacked. He also preached that by joining the crusade any sins would be washed away and that you would be guaranteed entrance to heaven. These tactics proved incredibly effective and the church managed to raise 60000 men and 6000 knights for the first wave of the invasion. The very first party or the People's Crusade was led by the preacher Peter the Hermit who had previously been held in Jerusalem and tortured which led to the brutality of the first crusade.



However, they were inexperienced and regular people. They engaged in a battle advised against by the Byzantine Empire and were wiped out. However, the second major wave was composed of militarily trained individuals and they were able to make significant strides into Asia Minor and take

important sites. However, Jerusalem was not among those cities and the siege of Jerusalem began on 7 June 1099. The Siege was not actually as long as expected though. As the leader of the army Godfrey of Bouillon found a weak point in the wall and managed to get troops into the city on 15 June 1099. After taking the city a mass slaughter took place in the city that is estimated to be around 3000 people of the 30000 who lived there at the time. One of the first major religious genocides. In total, there were 8 crusades to the holy land that were marked with mass deaths and genocide. These conflicts are one of the reasons the Middle East is very often in conflict religiously as it is a dividing point as many religions consider it their sacred ground and want the ruling body of the nation to follow their religion.

The current Israel-Palestine land conflict has developed as during the First World War a haven for Jewish citizens was promised in Palestine by England as an effort to convince more people to fight on their side and overthrow the Ottoman empire. Many Jewish citizens in Europe were suffering prejudice and the time. The idea was latched onto by many and became referred to as Zionism. The creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. This idea was very popular as Jewish citizens were also facing lots of prejudice in Europe at the time. A Zionist conference after this provided even more popularity to the idea and many ideas were promoted including increased Jewish funding into Palestine, increased Jewish immigration to Palestine and for rich Jewish citizens to buy land in Palestine. This became further supported by Western nations after the Zionist movement promised Western nations they would be a firm ally in the Middle East. All of these factors eventually led to the Balfour Declaration and the promise of a Jewish home in Palestine. Palestine was not consulted in this promise and had not agreed to anything before this.

After the First World War the League of Nations agreement that split up land owned by the losing nations of World War I gave Britain Palestine and after several more discussions with Zionist movements, Britain completely agreed to make Palestine into a safe Haven for Jewish communities. With Palestine and this movement the newly formed Arab National Committee called for Palestinians to strike, refuse to pay taxes and boycott Jewish-made products. Six months after the strike in 1936 Britain brutally repressed the strike and launched mass arrests and destroyed homes. The resulting period until World War II can only really be described as chaos with bombings, arrests, and violence. This conflict was only made worse after the British statement of Policy on Palestine took away Zionist rights in the country and caused a 3-way battle between the groups in Palestine. After the world war with Britain's military almost destroyed and the overwhelming number of Jewish refugees in Palestine they eventually gave in, quitting Palestine in 1947 and referring the issue to the UN. By this time The Jewish population was roughly 30% of the total country with Jewish citizens owning about 6% of the land. The United Nations partitioned the land between the different groups however the Zionist

government wished for more land and so attacked surrounding villages and towns in a fear campaign to get Palestinians to flee to create their new nation. These tactics proved effective and over 250,000 fled the country. After this, content with the land, the leader of the Zionist state David Ben-Gurion announced the founding of Israel with him as the first head of state. The Zionist militias reformed into the Israeli army, and with their advanced weaponry compared to the rest of the Middle East, and backed by many Western nations they repressed the attacks on Israel and turned outwards to conquer more land for their country. After Israel took most of Palestine and the UN secured an armistice the neighbouring countries of Jordan and Egypt annexed the remaining parts of Palestine. The UN passed a resolution later that year to allow Palestinian refugees to return home. However they never have been, and Palestine has been erased.

Today the population of non-Jewish and Jewish citizens and Jewish citizens is roughly the same. The current war in Israel is being fought to try and give control of the Gaza Strip back to Palestine. This is the major religious land conflict that should be settled within the resolutions proposed for this topic. Solution with both sides can agree on, "a fair deal".

Major Countries and Organisations Involved

United States of America

The United States is one of the nations with the least restrictive gun laws on the global stage. This leads to large death statistics from gun violence. With above 10,000 people dying every year as a result of gun violence. Due to these unrestrictive laws, individuals have much easier access to weapons capable of large death tolls meaning individuals can target groups with much more ease and as a result, there are lots of religiously motivated conflicts in America targeting specific religious groups.

OHCHR

The OHCHR (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) is an NGO focused specifically on supporting human rights and defending them. As stated by the OHCHR themselves. "UN Human Rights works to ensure the respect of freedom of religion or belief, the prohibition of incitement to religious hatred, and the celebration of diversity in society." "The Rabat Plan of Action, which considers the distinction between freedom of expression and incitement to hatred, including religious hatred. The second, the "Faith for Rights" framework, builds on the Rabat Plan and articulates ways in which "Faith" can stand up for "Rights" more effectively so that both enhance each other. In parallel, UN Human Rights prepares reports on efforts and measures taken to combat

intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatisation, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief" (OHCHR).

Israel

Israel is currently the nation involved in the largest conflict on religious grounds. Its history has sparked many different wars and religious hate towards both the Muslim groups living in Israel as well as the Jewish groups living in Israel. At the time of writing a very large death toll of above 10000 in only a few weeks. The conflict has resulted in violence between many Muslim and Jewish groups across the Middle East and around the world. A peaceful solution is paramount to this conflict and end the hatred and violence between these 2 religions.

Timeline of Events

Date (start - end)	Name	Description
July, 16 th , 1054	The East West Schism	The mutual excommunication of both leaders of the Eastern Orthodox Church and Roman Catholic led to the first separation of the Christian church.
November, 27 th , 1095	The First Crusade	The first crusade is announced by Pope Leo IX and marks the beginning of a very long conflict for Jerusalem.
October, 31 th , 1517	The nailing of the 95 Thesis	Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the church. Starting the reformation of the catholic and creating many new subgroups of Catholicism
November, 2 nd , 1917	The Balfour Declaration Is Signed	The balfour declaration was signed in the United Kingdom promising Jewish citizens a Jewish homeland at some point in the future.
January 30 th , 1933 - May, 8 th , 1945	The Holocaust	The slaughtering of Jewish citizens in Germany and across Europe marked one of the most violent and brutal acts of religious intolerance in history.
May, 14 th , 1948	Creation of the state of Israel	The creation of the state of Israel was announced the night before the total British withdrawal from Palestine.

June, 5 th , 1967 - June, 10 th , 1967	The Six Days War	The war between the Israel forces and a combined Arab force that established Israel as the dominant military power in the region.
January, 22 nd , 1973	Roe Vs Wade	The landmark case that protected women's rights to a abortion in America. It was overturned by the supreme court in 2022.
April, 6 th , 1992 - December 14 th 1995	Bosnian War	The beginning of the war between Bosnia and the state of Yugoslavia over a statement of independence. Displacement of thousands of refugees in the area.
March, 15 th , 2011	Syrian Civil War	Following years of unrest with the ruling political party of Syria several protests eventually lead to military action leading to a mass migration of refugees seeking asylum.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- Rapporteurs Digest on Freedom of Religion or Belief. (Updated Version)
- Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (the "1981 Declaration")

(A/RES/77/225)

- Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief

(A/HRC/RES/16/18)

- Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping and stigmatization of, and discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against, persons based on religion or belief

(A/HRC/RES/31/36)

- Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

American intervention in the Israel Palestine conflict has led to many talks regarding the situation offering peace to. Talks have included the secret talks of Oslo, the Madrid talks gave authority to a palestinian government while still not allowing them to rule their own nation. Being

a subsidiary under the Israeli government. These talks however in 1995 were negated after suicide bombers from Palestinian militant groups targetted civilian infrastructure and the Israeli army attempting to wipe them out. Lead the control of the Palestinian government again. Another major settlement in 2002/2003 gave the Palestinian government their own authority again. However the palestinian government must make obvious acts to disable the terrorist actions in gaza. In return Israel would remove all military presence in the area and remove settlements made after 2001, as well after removing the curfews in the Gaza strip.

Many acts have been taken by worldwide governments to try and tackle religiously motivated acts of violence. Anti-Terrorism majors mainly have reduced the acts of religious violence across the globe. A prominent example of this is UN Security Council Resolution 2178 which outlawed individuals who moved across state with the specific intent to perform terrorist actions. It also takes specific action to “. It also requires nations to permit the prosecution of individuals who are nationals or travel across borders in order to commit terrorist acts. As Well as making it illegal to fund FTF groups harbouring in their nations. While also requesting future reports in order to understand how the actions made against such groups have affected their actions.

International initiatives like the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol have built a framework for protecting those who are persecuted, including those who are being persecuted for their religious beliefs. Both the US Refugee Act of 1980 and the European Union's reception rules broadened criteria to include religiously targeted populations seeking asylum. However, persistent challenges to completely safeguard this right are highlighted by situations such as the persecution of Uighur Muslims in China and the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar. Even with the progress achieved by groups like Amnesty International and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there are still political complications and loopholes in enforcement.

There have been many attempts to previously solve the issue of religious intolerance. However sadly most of them have been unsuccessful and this is the issue that should be solved during the conference. Where hopefully some more effective solutions will be implemented

Possible Solutions

Sub-topic 1: Tackling religiously motivated acts of violence

Religiously motivated violence is a large topic that can have many possible solutions to it. The first solution is having more extreme humanitarian punishments for religiously motivated violent acts such as longer jail sentences. There are many drawbacks to this system however and it should only be referred to as a last resort. Another possible solution is more education in schooling on the practice of acceptance in different religious groups aiming to tackle the issue from the root. By educating children from younger ages they may be less likely to side with extreme religious groups in the end making the next generation far less religiously intolerant. However, they may lead to the rise of home education in nations that permit it with parents fearing their children may be corrupted by outside influences. Another possible solution is a global restriction on weaponry and the tools required to make weaponry making it far harder to commit acts of mass violence against specific religious groups. This solution is effective as it will have almost instantaneous results, however, it does little to combat the issue to start with and simply makes acts of violence far harder.

Sub-topic 2: Protecting the right to asylum for religious groups and their rights in the nations they seek asylum within

Refugees already have a difficult time when moving to a new country so the solution should be effective and simple in order to maximise their effectiveness. The first possible solution is a guaranteed percentage of jobs/schooling/housing for refugees and asylum seekers. This would give refugees guaranteed space within a home nation that they can live with. However, there are drawbacks to this idea as well. It could very easily create a segregated society of refugees vs residents as they clump up into specific areas. It may also cause resentment among refugees if citizens are kicked out of their homes to make space for refugees. Another viable option is the subsidisation of refugees by the UN making them cheaper in the nations they arrive in and making governments more likely to want refugees in their nations and thus build more infrastructure for them. This could however lead to mass want to be a refugee for the decreased living costs and benefits of having the refugee status. An option that could also function is that of which to intervene in the conflict or religious discrimination which forced refugees from their homeland allowing them to return home if they wish. This system could have drawbacks in terms of permanent settlement and could infringe on the rights of refugees if used incorrectly.

Sub-topic 3: Providing peaceful solutions to regions with religious land disputes

There are many possible solutions to divide land between groups. To start with, as possibly the most simple idea. Splitting the land between the 2 groups based on population sizes or any other viable method. This would have the benefit of giving both groups a government they are in favour of, however, may start a large conflict and would result in mass displacement of people. This solution while viable may not be the best solution for both groups. Another solution that may be viable is the creation of a Palestinian nation elsewhere on earth. This would require a large migration of peoples and a sizable

amount of land however it would give Palestinians a safe haven and a proper home to live in. Another optional solution would be a reformation of the government of Israel to an equal government that represents both Palestinians and Israelis at the same time and would thus be less biased to one side. A final option that could coincide with any solution could be to mark Jerusalem as an independent city-state governed and managed by the UN because of its importance to so many cultures and religions.

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