

KENTUCKY UNITED NATIONS ASSEMBLY 2025

SECURITY COUNCIL ISSUES

At KUNA, the Security Council will address **2 Issues** pertaining to international security in a specialized debate format. This year's issues are as follows:

- **Rising Global Extremism and Anti-Science Sentiment**
- **Ongoing Global Conflicts and Crises**

Each issue includes a resource guide with the following sections:

- **Background on Issue**
Summary and background information on the issue
- **Conflicts**
Summary of ongoing or recently concluded conflicts associated with the issue
- **Questions to Address**
Guiding questions/problems to address in position papers and resolutions
- **Sources**
Links to research, articles, and other resources on the issue

All Security Council members - both Middle School and High School - will prepare and submit a **Position Paper** stating the position of their country on each of these 2 issues prior to KUNA. You must submit a position paper, or your country risks losing its vote during Security Council debate.

Position Papers are submitted using the link below (NOT on your delegation's registration form), and are due by the registration deadline for your Assembly:

www.kyymca.org/kuna/security-council

The page above also includes links to the Security Council Resource Folder, which contains additional resources and templates for preparing for your role as a member of the Security Council.

At the Assembly, members of the Security Council will work together to draft, debate, and vote on Resolutions addressing each of the issues.

Our Security Council will also participate in a Crisis Scenario, which will be facilitated by the President of the Security Council President and YMCA Staff. Details regarding the scenario will be revealed at KUNA.

2025 AGENDA ISSUES

First Issue | Rising Global Extremism and Anti-Science Sentiment

Reichsbuerger Coup Plot

Brazil, January 8th

Disease Outbreaks Reach 30 Year High in Americas

Second Issue | Ongoing Global Conflicts and Crises

Russia-Ukraine War

Israel-Hamas War and Gaza Crisis

Sudan Conflict

Security Council | Issue 1

Rising Global Extremism and Anti-Science Sentiment

ISSUE BRIEF AUTHOR: Carson Song, President of the Security Council | HS KUNA 2

BACKGROUND ON ISSUE

Rising global extremism and anti-science sentiments pose significant threats to both the political and medical realms worldwide. Extremist movements, often fueled by misinformation and conspiracy theories, have caused many alarming incidents such as the Reichsbürger coup plot in Germany and the January 8th insurrection in Brazil. These incidents not only challenge the democratic institutions that maintain a free world order, but also further divide and polarize groups creating conditions for extremism to flourish. Additionally, the reappearance of vaccine preventable diseases across the Americas highlights the rising anti-science sentiment fueled by conspiracy theories and extremism. Today, the Americas have reached a record breaking 30 years high in declining vaccination rates and availability due to the lack of trust by citizens fueled by the spread of misinformation within communities through popular social media platforms posing a severe risk for all inhabitants, especially those who are immunocompromised. These crises highlight the urgent need for organized efforts to counteract extremism, restore public trust in democratic processes, and strengthen public faith and trust in public health departments and agencies.

CONFLICT 1: Reichsbuerger Coup Plot

On December 7, 2022. The largest counterterrorism raid in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany occurred resulting in the arrest of 25 individuals across the EU. Over 3,000 law enforcement personnel were mobilized to conduct raids and arrests the conspirators, uncovering documents, messages, and plans to storm the German Bundestag building (the federal parliament) and hold its representatives hostage. However, according to the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, although the plans were ambitious in scale, the efforts were highly unlikely to have been successful, thus such an event is best viewed as an "...early-stage terrorist plot, rather than a preempted imminent violent coup attempt." Among the confiscated materials found in the raids included 97 guns, over 25,000 rounds of ammunition, and military uniforms and equipment including helmets, night vision devices, and radios. Most alarming of all however was the discovery of the legality of the holdings of such equipment including many of the firearms by the arrested individuals raising concerns of the radicalization of military veterans. Furthermore, a crucial discovery in the plot was found to be the creation of a political wing in cooperation with the paramilitary wing of the coup plot heightening the cause for concern in a new development in German extremism.

As is common with extremist plots, the Reichsbuerger Coup Plot was fueled by conspiracy theories that intended to undermine the legitimacy of the recognized federal government through invalid legal ideas. The Reichsburger movement shares some of its ideologies with similar conspiracy theories such as the sovereign citizens conspiracy theory in the US and UK. While it is by no means a centralized movement and differentiates in its tendencies, it is unified through its central belief that the Federal Republic of Germany is not a sovereign state and with many believing in the popular view that it is instead a corporation similar to the sovereign citizen conspiracy theory. The Reichsburger movement is a loosely unified movement with differing beliefs but which generally fall under one of two beliefs: that

the German Reich of 1871 is the legitimate form of government or that the German Reich of 1937 is the legitimate government. The movement is heavily inspired by US based QANON conspiracy theories that have been stripped of US context and supplanted into a German environment while retaining many of the original views and ideas of the US based QANON theories such as the existence of a ruling German deepstate and a secret alliance of international powers that will liberate German of its current ruling government.

Unsurprisingly, the Reichsbürger movement is heavily prone to anti-semitic rhetoric and pro-Putin views. Investigation by the German authorities has revealed facilitated communication between the group of conspirators and Russian officials further raising concerns of foreign influence in growing influence of radical groups to exert foreign influence in domestic affairs.

Explosive growth of the Reichsbürger movement and other conspiracy theories has been linked with anti-lockdown and Covid-19 denier movements birthed during the Covid-19 lockdowns. According to German intelligence services, in 2019, the Reichsbürger movement contained around 19,000 members as compared to 2021 when it then contained around 21,000 members. To this day, the Reichsbürger movement continues to exist and garner support with latest estimates in 2023 projecting member counts at around 25,000.

CONFLICT 2: Brazil January 8

On January 8, 2023, Brazil experienced an unprecedented attack on its democratic institution, reminiscent of the U.S. Capitol insurrection. Thousands of supporters of former President Jair Bolsonaro stormed the presidential palace, Congress, and the Supreme Court in Brasília, hoping to overturn the recent electoral defeat of Bolsonaro to Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. This violent insurrection revealed the deeply rooted political polarization in Brazil, caused by many years of disinformation, societal division, and a diminishing trust in the government institution.

The 2022 Brazilian presidential election was marked by intense rivalry and controversy. Lula, the former president, narrowly defeated Bolsonaro in a hotly contested presidential campaign, during which allegations of election fraud were widely promoted. Bolsonaro, who had long fostered a crude political climate, cultivated rumors of conspiracy theories and questioned the legitimacy of democratic processes, gradually building an environment to persuade his supporters to take drastic measures when he lost the election. The environment he fostered laid fertile ground for political violence to climax into the events of January 8.

Another alarming aspect of the January 8 incident is the growing ties between the military and political extremism in Brazil. Bolsonaro's far-right movement has created an environment in which historical fascism and contemporary militarism combine, raising concerns about the potential erosion of democratic norms. The apparent complicity of some security forces during the attack further complicates this situation, as reports suggest that law enforcement had prior knowledge of the impending violence but failed to intervene. This complicity raises pressing questions about the role of security forces in political conflicts and the necessity for reform or civilian oversight into these institutions.

Research in the communication patterns of Bolsonaro's supporters during the insurrection also indicate that social media played a crucial role in the mobilization of Bolsonaro's followers. A peer reviewed study, published in Misinformation Review under the Harvard Kennedy School, analyzed over 15,000 public WhatsApp groups which revealed themes of nationalism, religion, and anti-left sentiment were prevalent throughout all the groups. Misinformation accompanied every key event leading up to the attack, emphasizing how extremist groups effectively utilized social media to propel support and spread false narratives. The rapid dissemination of misleading information has not only caused violent actions but also contributed significantly to the deterioration of public trust in democratic institutions. The January 8 attack underlines the weary state of Brazilian democracy which

has been further compromised by a legacy of corruption, such as the "Operation Car Wash." Stepping office, Lula's administration acknowledges the difficult task of rebuilding the trust in his government while healing a deeply divided populace. Recent surveys indicate a growing indifference toward democracy among certain segments of the population, although there have been signs of recovery in public sentiment.

International responses to the events of January 8 have been swift. The European Parliament condemned the anti-democratic violence and expressed support for Lula's government, emphasizing the need for accountability for those involved in the attack. The EU's resolution calls for thorough investigations and prosecutions, highlighting the critical need for a commitment to democratic principles and the rule of law in Brazil.

As Lula da Silva attempts to steer Brazil towards a more unified future, he must confront the daunting realities of a nation marred by political polarization and extremist rhetoric. The aftermath of the January 8 attack serves as a reminder of the vulnerabilities within a democratic framework. Addressing societal divides, restoring public trust in institutions, and countering the pervasive influence of disinformation will be crucial for Lula's administration and other democracies to maintain freedom. Through a concerted effort to foster dialogue and rebuild democratic norms, Brazil and other countries grappling with rising political violence can work toward cultivating a more cohesive and resilient society with the preservation of democratic institutions in the forefront.

CONFLICT 3: Disease outbreaks reach 30 year high in Americas

The Americas are currently experiencing a significant increase in disease outbreaks, reaching a record breaking 30-year high. This alarming increase is largely thanks to a steady decline in vaccination rates and the resurgence of vaccine-preventable diseases.

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) has reported a drastic decline in vaccination coverage across the Americas. In 2021, approximately one in five children under the age of one did not receive all of their vaccines. This decline has left around 2.7 million children unprotected against common diseases such as diphtheria, tetanus, and whooping cough.

PAHO's is committed to reversing this trend by implementing innovative initiatives such as Vaccination Week in the Americas (VWA), which has been used since 2003 in reaching nearly 1.1 billion people with life-saving vaccines across more than 40 countries and territories. However, despite these efforts, the resurgences, such as diseases like polio and measles, highlights the ongoing challenges posed by declining immunization rates and the spread of misinformation about vaccine safety and efficacy.

In North America, infectious diseases such as influenza, tuberculosis, and Lyme disease continue to pose significant health threats to the population. As of July 27, 2024, the U.S. reported low influenza activity, with only 0.7% of clinical lab specimens testing positive for the flu. Yet low vaccination rates for flu and COVID-19 are still observed creating greater concern, particularly among children and older adults as low vaccination rates pose huge health risks. As of late 2023, only about 40% of eligible individuals had been vaccinated against the flu, and around only 10% had received the latest COVID-19 booster.

Public health officials are worried that these low vaccination rates could lead to increased hospitalizations and illness rates, especially during the winter months when respiratory viruses are at the highest level. The reappearance of multiple respiratory viruses, such as influenza, COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), could potentially overwhelm healthcare systems if vaccination coverage does not improve. Leaving hospitals and clinics overwhelmed.

Furthermore, South America exhibits numbers concerning numbers relating to infectious diseases with a particularly severe outbreak of dengue fever, with over 3 million cases reported in 2023 alone. Brazil has been hit hardest, accounting for approximately 1.5 million of these cases. This outbreak has resulted in around 2,000 severe dengue cases and

over 1,300 deaths, affecting mostly children and the elderly. The rise in dengue cases is part of a broader trend of increasing infectious diseases in the region, due to climate change, urbanization, and declining vaccination rates.

Further worrying however is the extent to which anti-science sentiment has become a political tool. According to vaccinologist Peter Hotez, the growing rhetoric of anti-science has moved from the fringes of political discussion as sporadic posting from social media to organized, well-financed and politically motivated messaging. With the rise in organized attacks on science, further action must be taken by the international community to strengthen public trust in scientific institutions and continue the funding and support for the vital work that is accomplished through such institutions.

The rise in disease outbreaks in the Americas, driven by declining vaccination rates and the resurgence of infectious diseases, presents a significant public health challenge. To mitigate the impact of these outbreaks, it is essential to revamp vaccination efforts, combat misinformation, and strengthen public health infrastructure across the region. Through coordinated efforts and sustained public health initiatives, the Americas and the global community can work towards reversing this troubling trend and safeguarding the health, safety, and trust of the public.

QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS

1. Does your country support extremist groups?
2. How does your country operate its counterterrorism agencies?
3. Does your country cooperate in international counterterrorism organizations?
4. Does your country have growing extremist rhetoric?
5. Does your country's public hold growing anti-scientific sentiment including movement against vaccination?
6. Does your country have any public health crisis stemming from reduced public cooperation with public health agencies?
7. Is anti-scientific rhetoric found in any of your country's mainstream political parties?

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Security Council | Issue 2

Ongoing Conflicts and Crises

ISSUE BRIEF AUTHOR: Gabby Hartlage, President of the Security Council | HS KUNA 1

BACKGROUND ON ISSUE

The United Nations (UN) was founded with the expressed purpose to promote peace and cooperation between states, as well as to protect human rights. The UN has succeeded in many ways—it has provided support for refugees, promoted multilateral decision making between states, and, since 1946, the absolute number of war deaths has been declining. That said, the UN, of course, is far from perfect. Wars still occur, and aid to affected regions is not always sufficient. In fact, the amount of wars and violent conflicts emerging seems to be on the rise, and there are over a hundred million forcibly displaced people globally. As the decision making body of the UN, it is the Security Council's job to resolve these conflicts as they arise and to ensure that the UN follows its "Responsibility to protect."

Currently, new power struggles are emerging on the world stage and recent outbreaks of violence have shaken the world. The UN is now faced with the task of ensuring that new powers rise peacefully and that local conflicts do not break out into regional or even international ones.

CONFLICT 1: The Russo-Ukrainian War

In February of 2022, Russia began its re-invasion of Ukraine, an event that shook the world. Russia first invaded Ukraine in 2014, and, even then, the conflict that had been brewing for decades before then. In order to potentially resolve this crisis, it is important to understand its origins and effects. After the collapse of the Soviet Union into 15 separate states and the rise of President Vladimir Putin in Russia, Russia has made it its goal to reestablish itself as world power. This meant regaining control of the former Soviet states of Eastern Europe, resulting in Russia taking up an aggressive foreign policy towards Eastern Europe, particularly towards Ukraine due to geographical, economic, and cultural reasons. This pushed many Eastern European countries towards NATO, causing Russia to feel threatened by NATO's growing influence over the region and escalating the situation further. Russia took steps to discourage Eastern European countries, especially Ukraine, from aligning themselves with NATO. In Ukraine, this caused internal division, eventually leading to a

coup, a revolution, and culminated in Russia's first invasion of Ukraine and Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. In fear of nuclear war, many Western nations attempted to de-escalate the situation through the Minsk Accords, which worked for a time but have evidently failed to establish lasting peace.

While the West rushed to Ukraine's aid in 2022, as the war dragged on with no end in sight, aid to Ukraine has waned and become a point of conflict in many Western countries where aid to Ukraine has become a bargaining chip for political parties to use to advance their goals. In fact, it has strained relations between the U.S. and many of its European allies, like Germany and even France, and has undermined multilateral decision making in the world system. In Russia, the war has resulted in increased suppression of civil liberties and has allowed more and more power to be concentrated in the executive. And, of course, the war's effects on the Ukrainian people has been disastrous. Hundreds of thousands of people have died, and millions of others have been displaced. Ukrainian civilians have often been targeted by Russia, and Russia has been accused of committing war crimes against the Ukrainians.

So far, attempts to de-escalate the war have been unsuccessful. Peace negotiations have been initiated by and overseen by countries such as South Africa, Indonesia, Brazil, China, and many others, they've begun and been shut down repeatedly. Furthermore, economic sanctions against Russia have proven to be ineffective, and, on top of it all, even if unlikely, the threat of nuclear war looms over the conflict.

CONFLICT 2: The Israel-Hamas War and Gaza crisis

In 1947, the state of Israel was created via a UN charter because the Holocaust proved to many, especially to the Big 5 members of the Security Council, that Jewish people needed their own nation-state in order to be truly safe from persecution and violence. Jewish people have been persecuted for millennia, and Zionism, the ideology that argues for the creation of a safe haven for Jewish people in the form of a Jewish nation-state, was developed in the 19th century in response to the growing antisemitism across Europe. Israel was founded in the Southern Levant because it was the ancient Jewish homeland and holy land. It is important to note that Arab communities had been living in the Southern Levant region for centuries, and, over the course of the 20th century, Palestine was claimed by and promised to multiple nations and countries. Various empires laid claim to the region, and the

Palestinians who lived there were fighting to rule the land themselves. Nonetheless, in 1947, the state of Israel was created in the region through a UN charter. In 1948, war broke out between Israel backed by its allies, primarily the U.S. and U.S.S.R, and Palestine who was backed by most of the Arab world. Israel won the war and the land was partitioned between Israel and Palestine. The borders that were drawn would continue to be disputed.

Israel began what many consider an ethnic cleansing against the Palestinians. Ethnic cleansing is the forced removal of an ethnic group from a given territory or region. Israel also greatly restricts the movement and immigration of Palestinians through their territory. Historically, Israelis have denied Palestinians work in favor of Jewish immigrants in order to promote a Jewish state. Israel has also enforced sanctions and blockades on the Gaza strip, restricting access to food power, setting the stage for the rise of Hamas.

In October of 2023, Hamas, a terrorist organization and the ruling party of Gaza since 2006, launched a terrorist attack against Israel, targeting civilians and taking them hostage. Israel responded promptly, beginning the ongoing military offensive in Gaza. Since Israel's retaliation against Hamas, the humanitarian situation has quickly depreciated, with many describing it as the worst humanitarian crisis in history. Furthermore, both Hamas and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have been accused of and recorded committing atrocities and war crimes, including the use of chemical weapons and the targeting of civilians. There have also been threats of the conflict spilling out into the surrounding countries and that regional powers like Iran would become directly involved, escalating the conflict even further and potentially spelling disaster for the global community.

CONFLICT 3: The Sudanese Civil War

On April 15th, 2023, a civil war broke out in Sudan. The conflict began as a power struggle between two rival political leaders and their factions: Abdel Fattah al-Burhan with the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Mohamed Hamdan "Hemedti" Dagalo with Rapid Support Forces (RSF). Sudan has a history of dictatorships, military rule, and violent conflicts, and one of the key reasons as to why the power struggle between Burhan and Hemedti broke out into civil war is due to Sudan not being able to recover from its violent past. From 1989 to 2019, Sudan was under dictatorial rule, and, in 2019, there was a revolution to oust the dictator. The revolution culminated in a coup led by the SAF with support from the RSF and succeeding at deposing the former dictator. After the coup, Burhan came into power as the

leader of a transition government, and there were hopes that Burhan would step down and return power to a civilian leader as opposed to continuing military rule. However, after beginning the transition to civilian rule, the SAF led a coup in 2021 which returned Burhan to power. Shortly thereafter, the aforementioned power struggle between Burhan and Hemedti emerged in full force. While efforts were made to de-escalate the situation, they failed, resulting in the current civil war.

Approximately 15,000 killed people have been killed and 2 million displaced while another 25 million are in need of humanitarian aid. Aid to Sudan has been slim as other crises—like the Russo-Ukrainian war and the Gaza crisis—have taken most of the attention. The UN has taken efforts to end the conflict by demanding a cessation of violence in Sudan, but the ensuing peace talks fell through. The civil war has the potential to destabilize the entire region, a region which is already unstable due to other recent conflicts.

QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS

1. Is your country currently facing a violent or potentially conflict or crisis, especially if it wasn't one of the aforementioned conflicts?
2. How has your country been affected by the Russo-Ukraine War? Consider your country's economic ties to Russia and/or Ukraine and where it sources its oil.
3. What actions has your country taken in response to the Israel-Hamas War (what UN resolutions have they supported/not supported, have they provided aid to either Palestine or Israel, etc.)?
4. What has your country done, if anything, to provide aid and stabilize Sudan and the surrounding region? Consider recent conflicts in the surrounding region.
5. How can the Security Council create lasting peace in regions affected by conflict?
6. How can the Security Council support the victims of these conflicts and get sufficient aid into crisis areas and promote recovery and reconstruction in these regions?

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