



BMUN LXXII



SPECIAL POLITICAL AND DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE (SPECPOL)



LXXII
SEVENTH-SECOND SESSION

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Hello!

I am so honored to welcome you to the Fourth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly: Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL) of BMUN 72! My name is Jaina Doshi and I am beyond excited to serve as your Head Chair for this year. Currently, I am a sophomore at UC Berkeley studying Public Health and Psychology, on the pre-medical track. I am extremely passionate about global mental health as well as supporting marginalized communities through health advocacy and reform. I am from Southern California and have been involved in MUN since the seventh grade. Outside of BMUN, I am also involved in the Associated Students of the University of California (ASUC) Mental Health Commission, which serves to advocate for mental health policies and improved accessibility to health resources for students on campus. In my free time, I love trying new coffee shops, going on runs/hikes, and having cooking nights with my roomies!

This year, SPECPOL has the opportunity to discuss two very prevalent issues in today's world: first is Combating Foreign Aid Dependency Post COVID-19, and second the Political Status of Non-Self Governing Territories (NSGTs). Our first topic focuses on the many harsh impacts of aid dependency during and after the COVID-19 global pandemic. While foreign aid can be a beneficial short-term solution to supporting struggling nations, when developing countries become too dependent on international or external help, they begin to neglect improving their own economic state, establishing a stable government, and promoting self-government for their own societies. I chose this topic due to the large role it plays in continuing colonialism and preventing civil and economic independence in today's very complex world. Our second topic debates and discusses the political statuses of the current 17 official remaining NSGTs, within which two million people currently live. Within the last century, NSGTs have continued to gain a reputation for political and government instability, human rights violations, and close to no autonomy or sovereignty. With these two topics, I hope delegates will challenge themselves to truly explore and further research how these topics play a larger role in promoting democracy and fostering substantial social, economic, and political growth in the international community. Good luck researching and feel free to reach out with any questions by emailing [specpolbmun72@bmun.org]!

This year, I am also joined by my amazing Vice Chairs, Karishma Patel, Medina Danish, Iman Judge, and Jack Lyon! You can read more about them below:

Karishma is a third-year student studying Sociology and Public Policy! She's from Southern California and joined SPECPOL due to the nuanced topics this committee will debate this year. Outside of BMUN, Karishma is involved in the ASUC Student Advocate's Office where she provides confidential casework services to students navigating issues with the university. Lastly, Karishma enjoys hiking, spending time with

friends, and baking! She looks forward to meeting you all in March!

Medina is a second-year student majoring in Global Studies with a concentration in Peace & Conflict in the Middle East. She is highly interested in international relations and the issue of colonialism, leading her to join BMUN and more specifically SPECPOL! On campus, she is involved with a few organizations outside of BMUN, including the MEMSSA (Middle Eastern, Muslim, Sikh, South Asian) ASUC office and ECCO (Educate a Child for Change Organization), which creates an opportunity for accessible education for Afghan girls. She is a SoCal native and enjoys spending time at the beach. In her free time, she loves to bake, write, read, and take care of her plants. She cannot wait to hear your meaningful discussions soon!

Iman is a first-year student studying environmental science. She participated in Model UN during all four years of high school and is ready to experience conference and debate from the chairing point of view. Outside of BMUN, Iman is also a member of the Environmental Science Student Association, where she focuses her passion for the environment and protection of all corners of nature. Iman is originally from LA and loves to read tons of books in her freetime. She can't wait to meet you all in March and hear all your discussions and solutions you'll be bringing with you!

Jack is a first-year student studying planetary science and applied mathematics. He did MUN throughout high school and is excited to observe and moderate the debate he was once a part of. Outside of MUN, Jack works for the Federal Geographic Data Committee to help build national geological policy and identify risks to our planet. He is extremely passionate about the intersection of science and policy and is beyond excited to see your solutions come March!

Best,

JAINA DOSHI

Jaina Doshi
Head Chair of SPECPOL
Email: jdoshi@bmun.org



TOPIC A: COMBATting FOREIGN AID DEPENDENCY POST COVID-19

TOPIC BACKGROUND

The Role of Foreign Aid

Over the last several decades, foreign aid has become a large part of our global economy and has been utilized to form alliances between nations, support struggling populations, and promote global development. Foreign aid is defined as the voluntary transfer of resources from one country to another, with prime examples of aid including money, food/supplies, medical assistance, health care, education, infrastructure, and training services. During and post the COVID-19 pandemic especially, there has been much demand for humanitarian assistance and economic support due to the numerous healthcare and economic crises around the world. According to

the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which collaborates with 37 national governments to develop policies promoting sustainable economic growth, foreign aid reached an all-time high of USD 204 billion in 2022, a significant increase from USD 186 billion in 2021 (OECD 1). The global pandemic served as a test for multilateralism, as developing nations were in dire need of increased support to distribute vaccines, provide hospital services and medical resources, and meet basic needs such as food, water, and shelter. Many of the international community's most vulnerable populations and regions were further exposed and placed at risk due to the global crisis, creating an increasingly large need for support from developed countries.



United Nations dispersing shipments of foreign aid (Council on Foreign Relations)

In order to understand the function and purpose of foreign aid, it is also essential to recognize the various forms of aid (Bazilian 1), and the roles they play. Aid can be categorized into five different types: bilateral, multilateral, tied, military, and project-based. Bilateral aid is the most common form of foreign aid, and can be understood as aid given directly from one government to another. Bilateral agreements are often utilized for both geopolitical reasons and humanitarian purposes during crises and natural disasters.

Next, multilateral aid is when multiple developed governments support and give aid to a set of developing countries. A prime example of multilateral aid is the aid given by the World Bank, which assists developing countries by providing humanitarian resources and services. Tied aid works similar to bilateral aid, though the stipulations placed for recipient countries must be met for the aid to be successfully transferred. Military aid, unlike the other forms of aid, is not about donations but rather establishing defense contracts to sell and buy weapons. Military aid is primarily used to support developing nations and allies during wars to provide weapons and other defense resources. The largest known provider of military aid is the United States, with military aid accounting for 30% of their overall foreign aid (U.S. Department of State 1). Finally, project-based aid requires foreign aid to be spent on specific projects or forms of development, such as building hospitals or constructing roads.



UNICEF "tent schools": (Britannica)

Furthermore, there are different financial forms of foreign aid. Foreign aid can be transferred in the form of a gift, grant, or loan. A hard loan is a foreign loan which must be paid in the currency of the donor country, whereas a soft loan is a foreign loan where aid can be received or paid in the recipient country's currency. A hard loan is typically less favorable for the recipient country as it is more difficult to repay and often leads to debt. It also increases the likelihood of economic vulnerability, dependence on external financing, and debt burden. A federal grant is funding in the form of federal money given to local institutions, governments, or individuals.

Key Events

Foreign aid became popularized in the 1800s with the advent of imperialism. The rapid and widespread economic growth of European countries at the time created the capital needed for them to start providing aid to others. For example, during the reign of Frederick the Great (1772-1786), the Kingdom of Prussia provided assistance to underdeveloped countries, and in return received military support (Trosclair 2). By the 1920s, wealthy countries such as Germany, France, and the United Kingdom began providing financial aid to less powerful countries and sending resources to their colonies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In return, these colonial powers would expect access and control of ports, trading centers, and railways within the colonies. In the mid and late 1900s, the United States quickly became the world's biggest aid donor. The Marshall Plan of 1948 served as one of the pillars of U.S. foreign aid policy. The Marshall Plan served to provide more than USD 13.3 billion in aid and support to rebuild Europe post World War II (National Archives 2). This plan supplied struggling European governments with the capital, resources, and materials they

needed to rebuild their economy and infrastructure. For the United States, the Marshall Plan also served to provide markets for U.S. goods, establish strong relationships with trading partners, and support the development of democracy in Western Europe (Hinerschitz 4). During the Cold War, the United States Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, signed by President Kennedy, heavily expanded opportunities for international development and foreign aid. This established the "decade of development," which promoted an increase of foreign policy, security, and welfare of the United States in assisting international communities,



The Marshall Plan (The Hill)

Rise of the IMF and World Bank

In the 1940s, monetary funds and global corporations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank were established. Both organizations aim to reduce poverty and monitor the economic stability of the international community. The IMF specifically serves to promote global financial growth and macroeconomic stability through offering policy advice, trade and development systems, and monetary programs. The financial resources of the IMF are largely built through quota subscriptions from each member country, which determines their voting power and access to IMF financing. The IMF currently has 190 member countries, with

USD one trillion available for lending, 34 current lending arrangements, and 76 recipient nations of emergency pandemic financing (World Bank 2). The World Bank is an international development organization currently owned by 187 nations, and works to decrease poverty rates by lending money to member states in order to improve their economic and social welfare. The World Bank consists of various organizations which all hold a specific function. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and International Development Association (IDA 2) lends to low and middle income countries, the International Finance Corporation (IFC 1) lends to the private sector, the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA 1) facilitates corporate investment in foreign nations, and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID 3) helps resolve disagreements between private investors and foreign countries. Through the efforts of the World Bank, they have been able to supply drinking water to vulnerable populations, build schools, increase agricultural production, improve accessibility to health care, manage natural resources, and sustainably build roads and ports (IMF 3).

While both of these organizations claim to promote economic growth and development, they have also been the subjects of much controversy. It is argued that the IMF's large loans and economic policies allow member countries to act recklessly and pursue poor domestic economic policies, since they know that the IMF will eventually bail them out if needed (Bretton Woods Project 2-3). In short, the IMF serves as a large safety net which, over time, has promoted foreign aid dependency. Additionally, both the IMF and World Bank have been criticized for biased decision making and giving excessive control to more wealthy member states (U.S. Department

of State 1). The IMF has often required nations to lower their trade barriers and increase privatization in order to receive loans. Lowering trade barriers allows capital goods and services to flow more freely across countries, but it can also lead to wage cuts and job loss. Trade barriers are established by governments to regulate international trade in order to avoid an excessive inflow of foreign goods to the country. Thus, when powerful corporations or countries such as the United States reduce trade barriers with their trade partners, the exports and GDP of the United States will likely increase, but often at the expense of their trade partners. However, due to the key role these High Income Countries (HICs) play in supporting nations receiving loans, Low Income Countries (LICs) are pressured to agree to unfavorable loan terms and follow harsh restrictions.

What is Foreign Aid Dependency?

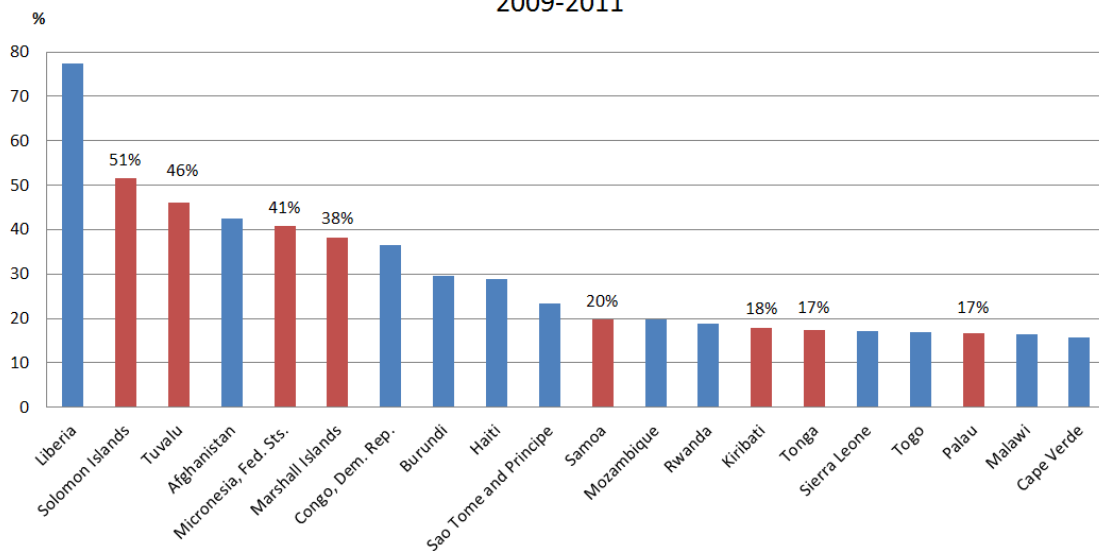
While foreign aid can be a beneficial short-term solution to supporting nations in crisis and vulnerable populations, there are also many long-lasting negative effects. In essence, foreign aid dependency starts when newly emerging or developing countries become too reliant on the resources of donor countries, causing them to neglect developing the infrastructure needed for economic self-sufficiency. These countries also typically fail to establish a stable government, promote self-governance for their own societies, and take accountability for their underdeveloped state. Instead of stimulating investment, foreign aid decreases the ability for government officials and locals to implement their own decisions and solutions, and reduces the need for labor. Over the past decades, aid has continued to be one of the largest contributors to the cycle of poverty, as it is constantly being provided to nations with no evidence of improving their

overall GDP and development. While aiding others has inherent social value, it is the long term reliance on foreign aid that has inhibited sustainable growth in developing nations.

Additionally, numerous situations and political relationships have demonstrated how foreign aid and donations have contributed to corruption, cronyism, and internal deficits. Frequently, aid is either misappropriated and utilized for personal gain or power, or further worsens the socioeconomic status of the recipient's people. A key example of corruption through economic policies is the large donations of food aid, which disrupt local economies and businesses by reducing market demand. When declining aid is then replaced with commercial imports instead of locally sourced food due to cheaper prices or lack of capacity from agricultural stagnation, regions and locals are further economically harmed. The situation in Haiti, which is dependent on U.S. imports for 80% of grain stocks highlights this issue (OECD 1). Further, foreign aid to governments is often appropriated by cor-

rupt government officials or mishandled due to weak leadership. One of the most egregious examples of this is the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has consistently received aid from countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States, but still struggles with extremely slow Product (GDP growth and a long list of social, political, and humanitarian issues. In June of 2020, the Democratic Republic of the Congo found President Felix Tshisekedi's Chief of Staff, Vital Kamerhe, guilty of corruption with a sentence of 20 years of hard labor. In court, he was found guilty of embezzling close to USD 50 million of public funds, which could have been utilized to address societal and economic problems. Instead, donor nations and corporations gain large political leverage through the aid and support they supply, and thus continue the cycle of aid, corruption, and poverty. The blame should not fall entirely on developing nations, but rather on Western powers which have taken advantage of them for centuries, ushering in a new era of colonialism.

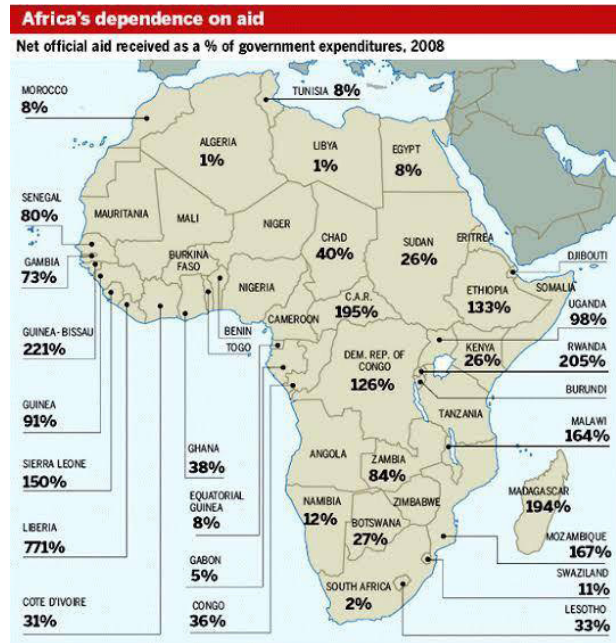
**Aid-to-GNI ratios of top 20 aid dependent nations
2009-2011**



Ration of Foreign aid to Gross National Income (GNI) (OECD)

How Foreign Aid Contributes to Neo-colonialism

The utilization of aid has become deeply entrenched within our economic and political system, and over the decades have contributed to a new role and purpose: neocolonialism. Neocolonialism can be defined as the use of economic, political, and other pressures to control and influence other countries, without needing to directly colonize them. Despite the end of formal colonialism, nations have pursued power, wealth, and influence through foreign aid, leading to foreign aid dependency within recipient countries. Nations that receive foreign aid from powerful countries are often pressured to exploit their own natural resources, decrease tariffs, decrease border restrictions, and follow specific trade agreements, which can further diminish their economic status. Many wealthy nations place expectations on their aid-recipient countries to support them and provide access to the recipient's markets in return. One of the most prevalent examples of neocolonialism is China's economic policies and regulations, which have served to impose their power and influence on nearby nations. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a large-scale Chinese infrastructure project that aims to stretch around the globe, and has been recognized as a mechanism to expand their influence, ideologies, and military. According to a case study by the University of Vermont, the BRI serves a tactic for China to gain soft power, or utilizing non-coercive means to get what one wants. Through spreading education and economic support, China consequently establishes their influence and ideologies. Thus, while HICs are not directly colonizing, they are informally setting a clear obligation to follow their regulations.



Foreign Aid Breakdown in the African Bloc (International Development Blog)

A prime example of neocolonial exploitation through foreign aid today is Sub-Saharan Africa. According to an OECD report from 2019, Africa's foreign aid totaled 34.4% of total net official development assistance (ODA) globally, with Sub-Saharan Africa's ODA amounting to USD 41.2 billion (Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office 1). ODA is defined as government aid directed toward economic development and welfare for low-income countries. Most African nations greatly depend on the West, specifically nations such as the United Kingdom and the United States, to develop aid initiatives, provide medical resources, and create low-level labor opportunities. In return, these nations expect control over many of Africa's markets and resources and often enforce new economic regulations favoring themselves. The New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (NAFSN) has aimed to eradicate hunger in aid recipient countries, including Malawi and Ghana. However, the NAFSN has also facilitated "land-grab

bing” tactics within their plan to establish “agricultural corridors”. These practices have facilitated the unemployment and dispossession of local farmers and agricultural workers in the name of agribusiness, implemented by corporate NAFSN partners. The NAFSN has been backed and funded by donors including the United Kingdom Department for International Development (UK DFID) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). These large investments made by donors to the NAFSN have caused the theft of land from local farmers to large agricultural corporations throughout Africa, and serves as a prime example of modern day colonialism.

Present-day economic systems serve to perpetuate exploitation, dependency, and inequalities between powerful nations and developing countries. Despite decades of decolonization efforts, foreign aid has re-established imperialist practices of economic pressures, political suppression, and cultural dominance. A key example of neocolonialism is in bilateral aid programs such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. Beginning in the late 1970s, China began to build ties with other nations in order to increase their influence and power. By increasing aid and support to African nations and neighboring regions and promoting Chinese-based higher education and political agendas, China has steadily increased their soft and economic power (Edwards 2). Soft power is defined as the ability to influence and shape the behavior of other countries without utilizing military force or economic coercion. By spreading anti-Western ideologies in Taiwan and to developing regions, they were able to gain much support and overall assert their dominance in aid-recipient countries. Another example is China’s Hanban program, which used education as its tactic to gain power and support from developing countries. The project established

210 Confucius Institutes worldwide to educate other cultures on Chinese language and culture. This program trained over 300 teachers and spent USD 26 million on textbooks, resources, and equipment (World Bank 4). By investing their own resources, time, and services to the expansion of their economic and social policies, they are able to broaden their influence within the continent and to other emerging nations.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is defined as the buying of an asset, resource, or capital in another country which provides direct control to the purchaser. FDI plays an essential role in the development of emerging nations and is largely carried out by powers including the United States and European Union. Foreign Direct Investment is also recognized as a cross-border investment, where an international investor is able to establish long-term investment and influence over an enterprise in another region’s economy. Due to the dire need for investments in healthcare, infrastructure, machinery, and businesses, developing regions often offer many incentives to foreign investors. FDI projects have included trade liberalization, strengthening laws and policies, and advancing transportation infrastructure. Modern-day examples of FDI include McDonald’s investing in Asian countries such as India in order to increase their consumer reach and number of stores in the region. This tactic allows businesses to enter foreign economies and strengthen its supply chain without needing to alter their business model.

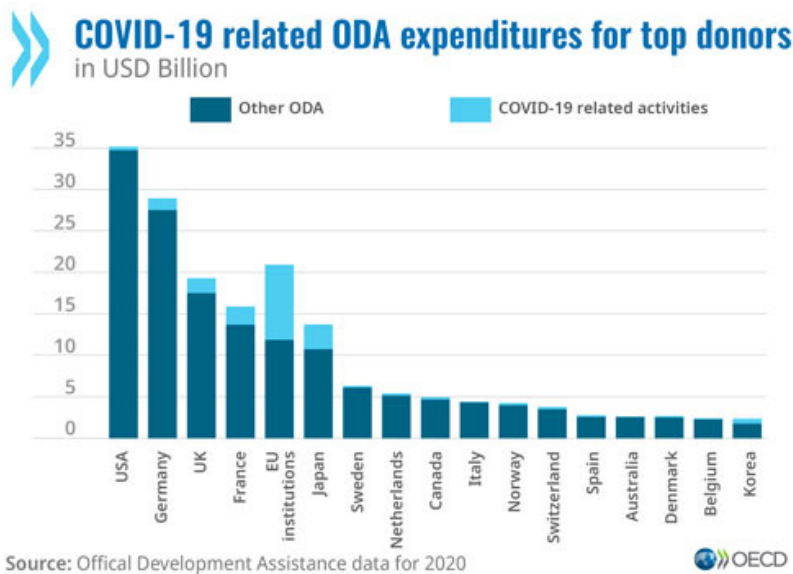
While FDI was a strong mechanism to improve the economic and environmental state of Africa in earlier decades such as the 1990s, it has now worked to promote foreign investment dependency and give

opportunities for powerful corporations to take control of struggling governments and regions. Financial compensation and foreign technological support has been extremely beneficial to nations such as Kenya and Congo, but in the past two decades have also begun to take away economic and political opportunities for locals (John Hopkins 1). Foreign investors stunt the growth and production of cultural and handcrafted goods, local small businesses, and native employment due to the needs and resources of foreign investors. Powers such as the United States, the United Kingdom, China, Germany, and France all place a large emphasis on foreign investment as a tactic to hold stakes in private sectors and increase their imperial control. In order to effectively work toward combating foreign aid dependency, delegates should

research into developing more cooperative forms of FDI to build up economic institutions rather than take advantage of them.



The advantages and disadvantages of Foreign Direct Investment (The Balance)



Official Development Assistance's Top Donor Countries (OECD)

Impacts of COVID-19

The onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 worsened the situation in already vulnerable LICs and developing countries. In many of these

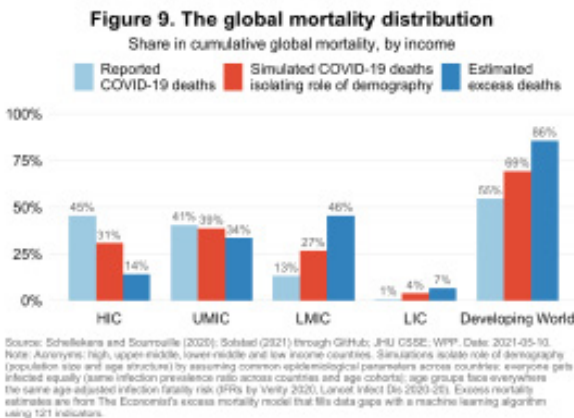
nations, the COVID-19 pandemic has yet to end, as they continue to suffer from a lack of basic and essential resources such as clean water, vaccines, doctors, and masks (UNHCR 1). Aside from humanitarian and public health crises, developing countries also

faced some of their worst economic years due to the COVID-19 crisis. The figure above, indicates the top Official Development Assistance (ODA) amounts by nation. Donations during the COVID-19 pandemic heavily increased, largely from colonial powers including the United States, United Kingdom, and France. According to a report by Pandemic Oversight in 2022, an estimated 2,000 recipients in 177 countries received a tidal wave of USD 6.4 billion in aid, with 1,000 national grants approved.

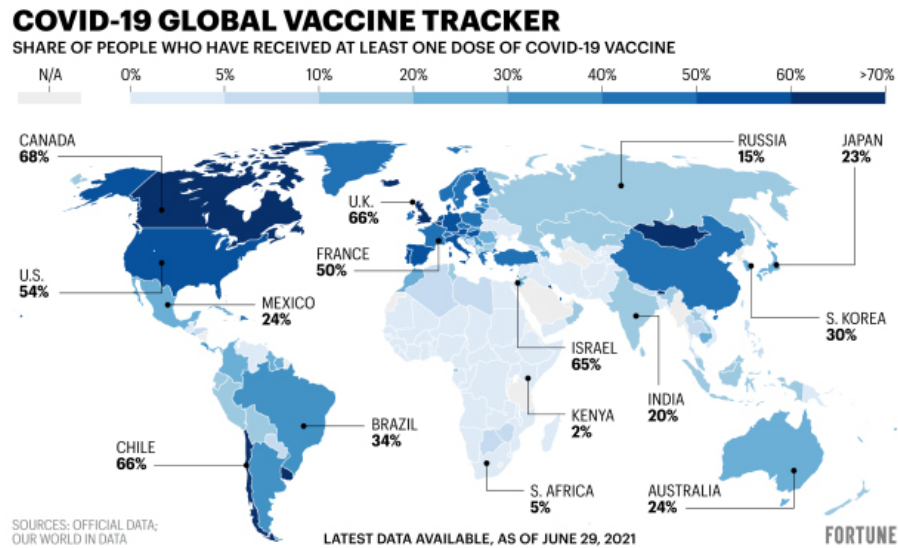
According to the World Bank, job losses in these countries translated into income losses equating to two-thirds of the average household income (World Bank 1). Further, a study conducted indicated that 15.3% of people interviewed witnessed one or more adults in their household go without eating for a full day due to a lack of resources. Global health experts found from a study conducted in March 2022 that 35% of the world had yet to receive a single dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, and 42% of the world is not fully vaccinated. While in High Income Countries such as the United States and United Kingdom, 79% of the population has received a dose of the vaccine, only 14% have in Low Income Countries (United Nations 1).

The pandemic created a large influx of needs for vulnerable populations living in developing countries and regions, thus further establishing the need for foreign aid. In turn, many developed nations took advantage of this opportunity to further their influence and control of struggling nations.

The large disparity and lack of vaccine equity between developed and developing countries, as explained by the Director of African Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, was due to wealthy countries buying vaccines in excess. For example, Canada purchased enough doses to vaccinate their country five times, while more impoverished countries were left with enough doses to vaccinate a tenth of their population. Additionally, biotechnology companies such as Pfizer and Moderna have reduced the license of their mRNA technology in developing countries, which has caused the inability to produce high quality vaccines for vulnerable populations in low-income nations (United Nations 2). By not allowing emerging countries to access their research, technologies, or healthcare solutions, these nations are forced to further struggle and create their own means of vaccination with inadequate resources. Furthermore, several countries in the European Union continue to block efforts by World Trade Organization members to waive Trade-Related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) for technologies desperately needed to prevent, contain, and treat COVID-19. These examples indicate the self-interests of HIC governments to promote their own power and influence over the eradication of inequities and various social issues.



Reported vs. Excess Deaths (The Economist)



Covid-19 2021 Global Vaccine Tracker (Our World in Data)

PAST UN/IGO RESPONSE

Although the problem of dependency on foreign aid existed prior to the pandemic, the spread of COVID-19 and its consequences exacerbated the issue at hand. As a result of the global pandemic, more aid was necessary, especially in developing regions. Various resolutions transpired as a result. The United Nations has been recognized to be one of the main providers of humanitarian aid and assistance, and has often played a large role in providing foreign aid or encouraging their member states to do so. Currently, the United Nations provides food, supplies, and assistance to over 91.4 million people in 83 nations across the globe, supplies vaccines to 45% of the world's children, and assists 71.4 million people fleeing war and persecution (United Nations 2).

In Document A/76/L.23: Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, there is an emphasis on the UN's commitment to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of emergency response efforts. In addition, the document urges member states to prioritize their efforts in preventing, responding to, investigating, and prosecuting acts of sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian emergencies, which may be amplified due to quarantines. It also calls for strengthening national, multilateral, and international cooperation to ensure fair, equitable, and timely access to COVID-19 vaccines, testing, and treatment. Lastly, the document calls on member states, parties to armed conflicts, the United Nations, and other

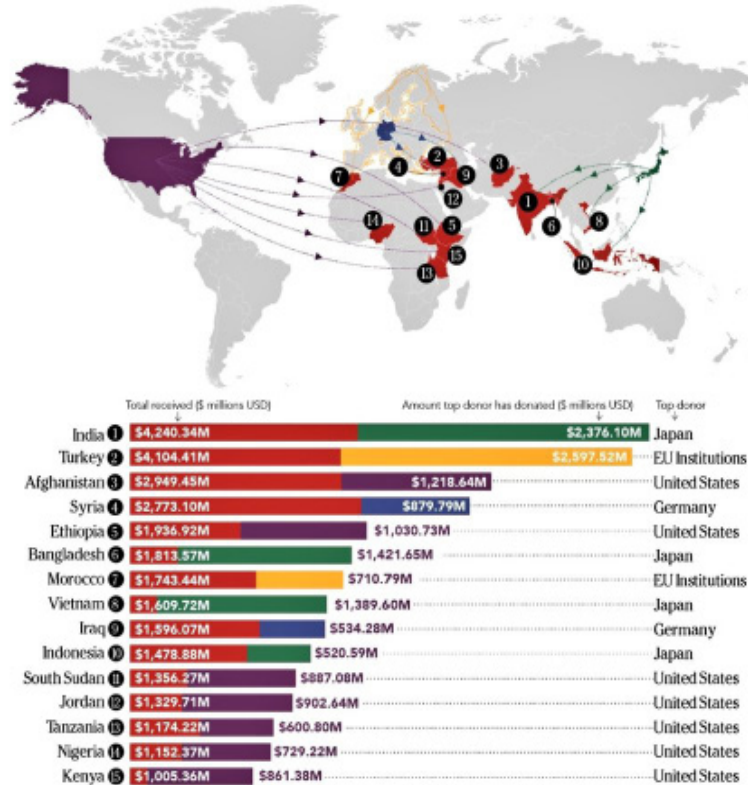
relevant actors to urgently increase measures to prevent famine and address acute food insecurity, while simultaneously condemning the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare.

itarian crises. It further called for Member States to consider supporting the White Helmets both through their humanitarian programs and financially through the special voluntary funds.

Another significant document is Document A/76/L.24 : White Helmets Commission: participation of volunteers in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development. Although the White Helmets had been established in 1994, there was a different kind of need for them during the COVID-19 pandemic. This document invited the Secretary-General to continue to deem the White Helmets initiative as one suitable for preventing and mitigating the effects of disasters and other human-

More recently in 2021, Document A/76/L.27: International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development was adopted. Here, the crucial role of humanitarian assistance is acknowledged, as states are called upon to continue to assist legislatively and otherwise to help mitigate disasters. However, it is also emphasized to integrate disaster risk reduction strategies into development planning. This takes a more anticipatory approach to risk management.

TOP 15 RECIPIENTS OF FOREIGN AID FROM DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN 2017 AND THEIR TOP DONOR



Sources:
<https://www.oecd.org/dac/development/aid-to-2017-top-15-recipients-country-by-country/>
<https://www.oecd.org/dac/development/aid-to-2017-top-15-recipients-country-by-country/>
<https://www.oecd.org/dac/development/aid-to-2017-top-15-recipients-country-by-country/>
<https://www.oecd.org/dac/development/aid-to-2017-top-15-recipients-country-by-country/>



In addition to the UN response, intergovernmental response was mainly carried out through the Development Assistance Committee (DAC). The Development Assistance Committee was created to foster discourse on issues related to aid, especially those of humanitarian and economic importance, and consists of 30 donors. In 2017, the biggest donors (ordered from most to least) were the following: the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, the European Union, Japan, France, Italy, Sweden, Netherlands, and Canada. As indicated, the United States is the largest aid contributor, amounting to about USD 35 billion of aid in 2017. In the same year, the top 15 recipients of foreign aid (again ordered from most to least) were India, Turkey, Afghanistan, Syria, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Morocco, Vietnam, Iraq, Indonesia, South Sudan, Jordan, Tanzania, Nigeria, and Kenya.

Another relevant response is the DAC mandate for 2018-2022. The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) is an international committee under the jurisdiction of the Organization for Economic

Cooperation and Development (OECD) that was established in order to collect and analyze developmental data. Moreover, this committee establishes a forum for the world's largest aid providers to engage in dialogue regarding the effectiveness and efficiency of aid distribution to developing countries. One important fact to note is that the DAC does not disburse aid themselves, but rather, seeks to peacefully facilitate and encourage the distribution of aid and implementation of aid assistance policies of its members. Its main achievement has been the creation of codes of best practice that its members are asked to observe when conceptualizing and implementing official policies on development (IMF 1). The main objective of the committee then was to promote the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the goals of sustainable, inclusive economic growth, poverty eradication, a bettering of living standards in the developing world, and self-sustaining countries. They promoted this agenda through encouraging development cooperation and working with relevant policy.

INTERNATIONAL ACTION AND RESPONSE

During the pandemic in 2020, official development assistance (ODA) increased to its largest number due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It has become apparent that now, more than ever, it is necessary to support developing countries with policies and programs that foster long-term sustainable development. The World Bank has long been both praised and criticized for its developmental assistance projects. One such example of a project that would fall under this category would

be their strategy in regards to COVID-19's impact on the Malaysian economy. The government identified the poorest 40% of the Malaysian population as the focus of the strategy due to this group's vulnerability to economic changes. The government thus far has slowly moved towards more specific measures to support this population, mostly through cash transfers to low-income households. This strategy, under the name The World Bank Group Inclusive Growth and

Sustainable Finance Hub in Malaysia, focuses on three areas: Supporting Inclusive Growth, Promoting Sustainable Finance and Inclusive Finance, and Enhancing Good Governance. With the implementation period being 2020-2025, this project has just surpassed its mid-way point. With the completion of this project, it is difficult to discern if this will impact Malaysia in a positive or negative way. This project

has the potential to further bind the country to donations from developed countries, or it could help build a resilient economy that supports the bottom 40% post-pandemic (IMF 2). It is essential to take notes of the positives and negatives that have arisen from previous international efforts and ongoing projects regarding foreign aid.

CASE STUDIES

The IMF and Ghana

As discussed previously, there is much controversy regarding global corporations and monetary funds such as the IMF. While in theory, their functions and missions hold much importance to supporting economically struggling countries and governments, in reality, there have been several long lasting negative impacts. Furthermore, the IMF and international community have seen increasing economic inequality between developing and developed countries since the COVID-19 pandemic. While the IMF has 189 member states, HICs such as the United States and its allies hold the majority of the votes and have the power to veto almost any major decisions (Naadi 3). Especially in Africa, the IMF has been known to establish harsh conditions for their loans, including removing tariffs and trade barriers, which pose large threats to economic stability. In 2017, the IMF loaned around USD 134.7 billion to 15 nations, but the local economies have not been necessarily stimulated by such loans and investments (World Data 1).

A key example exemplifying the criticisms of the

IMF is Ghana. Ghana has held a relationship with the IMF since its independence in 1957. Despite its economic support and policy recommendations, the IMF has made no substantial effort to diversify Ghana's economy. Instead, the IMF continued to keep Ghana dependent solely on their gold and cocoa exports to support the whole nation, while in return offering loans (World Bank 3). Over time, the IMF would continue to supply loans as Ghana struggled with debt, inflation, and a pattern of borrowing and dependence. Ghana is currently facing one of its worst economic crises in decades, with rapid inflation causing most Ghanians to struggle to afford basic essential goods and services such as food, healthcare, education, and rent. According to a recent report from February, the inflation rate in Ghana rose to a high of 52.%, largely due to the negative impacts from both COVID-19 and Russia's invasion of Ukraine (Transparency International 1). Further, the IMF often creates loan arrangements with structural reforms that increase poverty. These arrangements required recipient nations to cut government spending, which has forced the firing of thousands of public sector employees, fiscal tightenings that have pushed

economies into recession, cutting social spending on healthcare and education, and raising taxes on the impoverished (Council on Foreign Relations 1).

Additionally, there has been much outcry against Ghana's government for its poor economic policies. Over the past several years, Ghana has significantly raised their taxes under the guise of saving the economy, and immediately afterward, announced they would be re-entering the International Monetary Fund. Ghana has received help from the IMF over 17 times, with close to no improvements, which have made many question what they expect out of the most recent loan agreement of USD 3 billion. These decisions have scared many Ghanaians, as they fear harsh measures and economic policies imposed by the IMF. A new opposition group alongside numerous unions have gone on strike in order to increase pressure on the government as the talks continue.

Afghanistan's Dependence on Foreign Aid

The United States and the international community has donated over USD 100 billion in foreign aid to Afghanistan over the last 10 years in order to build a safer and more developed country. With these large amounts of foreign aid and resources, Afghanistan has seen slight improvements such as a small increase in the GDP, increased life expectancy, and some infrastructure developments. However, much of these improvements have been a result of the money given from foreign governments, not due to an increase in growth or independence within Afghanistan. Despite the vast amounts of money given to the Afghan gov-

ernment, the nation is still ranked at the third most corrupt in the world, growth is still relatively low, and the government lacks much structure and experience in foreign aid policies (World Bank 3). These massive flows of money and supplies have fueled a steady increase in systemic and government-wise corruption, a lack of transparency, and close to no equity or autonomy. Countries in the Western world and colonial powers such as the United States have rushed to flood money into Afghanistan rather than giving them time and resources to become more independent and developed.

Further, Afghanistan's economic reliance on the international community has put it in an extremely vulnerable position. The pandemic increased poverty rates, and decreased government revenues. Large disruptions in trader and lower industry outputs have put the Afghan government under much pressure, indicating a desperate need for much political and economic change in the nation. In 2022, the United States froze much of their assets to Afghanistan due to the fall of the Afghanistan capital, Kabul, which has further worsened the economic crisis (Abate 5). The frozen aid money has crippled both the Afghan economy and banking system, with 90% of Afghans living on an income of less than 2 USD a day. Since August 2022, the cessation of assets has pushed a large portion of Afghans to lose their jobs and not receive their salaries, causing a by 20.7% decrease in GDP. This has spiraled into a humanitarian crisis in the nation, with a large lack of medical equipment, medicines, educational supplies, and food. The inflation rate in February 2023 also reached 3.5%, elevating the cost for basic products and supplies (Feeny 6).

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What social and economic barriers have the COVID-19 pandemic created for nations? How can healthcare systems be improved to account for the many vulnerable populations affected by the pandemic?
2. Are double taxation treaties (two-party agreements to avoid international double taxation) and other Foreign Direct Investment policies valuable to both developing countries and foreign investors, or does one party benefit from the transaction more than the other? In what ways?
3. In what specific ways does a large influx of foreign aid hinder political and social growth? What are real world examples that display this? What steps should be taken by nations to improve this?
4. How can organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) limit their contributions to neocolonialism?

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TOPIC B: THE POLITICAL STATUS OF NON-SELF GOVERNING TERRITORIES (NSGTS)

TOPIC BACKGROUND

What Are Non-Self Governing Territories?

Non-Self Governing Territories (NSGTs) are formally defined as territories that are under the control and administration of a foreign power. Thus, NSGTs lack the right to full self-governance, self-determination, and autonomy. The concept of such territories became widespread when powerful nations turned towards colonialism in the late 15th century, as a strategy to expand their wealth, territory, and power. NSGTs serve as a reminder of the existence of colonialism in the modern world, as well as the many long lasting impacts of colonization and paternalistic ideals over the last centuries. Within these territories are histories deeply-rooted in neocolonialism, human

rights violations and abuses, government corruption, and exploitation of people, resources, and culture. The topic regarding the political statuses of NSGTs emphasizes the interplays of political, economic, and social power between current member states.



Political Cartoon of Colonization from the 1800s- "The Plumb Pudding in Danger" (the British Library)

There were originally 72 Non-Self Governing Territories established, with over 750 million people living within them (United Nations 1). At present, 17 NSGTS remain with five different colonial powers in rule and over 2 million people currently living in the territories (Colonialism 3).

- Since 1946, the United Kingdom currently holds ten territories under its rule: Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, the Falkland Islands, Montserrat, Saint Helena, Turks and Caicos Islands, Gibraltar, and Pitcairn.
- The United States has held three territories since 1946: the U.S. Virgin Islands, the American Samoa, and Guam.
- France currently owns New Caledonia (since 1986), and French Polynesia (since 2013).
- New Zealand has held Tokelau since 1946.

- Morocco has assumed rule over the Western Sahara since 1975₁.

These 17 NSGTS face a wide plethora of challenges and problems, stunting the growth of their society and the living standards of their inhabitants. According to a report published by Amnesty International, the seven reasons underdeveloped Non-Self Governing Territories have struggled to improve their economic and social state is due to civil wars and terrorism, political corruption, knowledge gap/ education, health and poverty, geographic disadvantages, international aid, and unfair trade policies. These territories, alongside the numerous social and humanitarian issues occurring, also lack sovereignty and self-determination, highlighting the evident need to achieve full independence.



The 17 Remaining Non-Self Governing Territories (United Nations)

Key Events

The political status of Non-Self Governing Territories holds a long and deep-rooted history in colonialism, impacted by several other key events pertaining to the right to self-determination, political and diplomatic decisions, and economic welfare.

The Age of Imperialism and Colonization

The age of “Old Imperialism” ranged from 1450-1650, when European powers set out to explore, conquer, and establish colonial empires across Africa, Asia, and the Americas to make a profit through their resources, land, trade routes, and labor. This era has since been recognized for establishing colonial control and spreading European influence, exploiting indigenous populations, suppressing various cultures and social structures, and limiting the right of colonies to self-governance and autonomy (Lehrman Institute of American History, 2). A prime example being Spain and Portugal’s interest in America in hopes of finding new lands, resources, and metals (gold and silver). The era of “New Imperialism” ranged from 1870 to the mid-20th century, and involved the expansionist policies of powerful countries to utilize neocolonialist policies to spread their influence. European powers, the United States, and Japan all attempted to exert their control and rule through economic dominance, resource exploitation, foreign-aid dependency of underdeveloped regions, political pressure, trade agreements, and cultural influence. All of these strategies were utilized for powerful nations to spread their influence and exert their dominance in the world, resulting in the establishment of NSGTs and a lack of autonomy and self-governance for numerous populations globally.

Within this era was also the “Scramble for Africa” which describes the period of intense European colonization and imperialism within Africa to exploit their resources, land, and people. This period of time highlights the true exploitation of territories and colonies as powers began to divide and establish colonies, extract immense amounts of natural resources and raw materials, deny basic rights of self-determination, impose social structures in various cultures, establish “free-trade areas”, and create artificial borders.

International Action

The adoption of the United Nations Charter in 1945 (United Nations, 4) reaffirmed the values and importance of self-determination as well as the evident need for decolonization. This charter laid the foundation for addressing the various issues and human rights violations occurring within NSGTs, as well as the need to change their political status. In the decade that followed, many countries including India, Indonesia, Egypt, Sudan, Morocco, Pakistan, and Libya were all able to gain their independence and the right to self-determination. In 1960, the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, which re-emphasized the need for colonialism and self-governance.

After this, the UN also established the Committee of 24, or the Special Committee on Decolonization, in order to address the political status of NSGTs and provide support to the populations in those territories. The following decade from the 1970s to 1980s included a large wave of decolonization, with previous NSGTs such as Namibia and Papua New Guinea finally gaining full independence. Another significant

event demonstrating the dire need for decolonization of the NSGTs is the ongoing conflict in the Western Sahara, as well as the formation of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) in 1976, which will be further discussed in the case study.

Key Actors

When debating the political status of NSGTs, there are several key actors that contribute to the dialogue, actions, and resolutions of decolonization of these territories.

1. **Administering Powers:** The largest key actors are the administering powers, which are the nations that control the NSGTs. The decisions made by these countries shape the political, economic, and social state of these territories, as well as the day-to-day standard of living for the populations residing in them.
2. **United Nations:** The United Nations also plays a critical role in helping improve the political state of NSGTs. Numerous UN organs including the General Assembly, Security Council, and UN Special Committee on Decolonization are often in discussion of solutions and programs to help alleviate the issue and facilitate the decolonization process.
3. **Local Leaders:** Local governments, leaders, and nationalist movements within NSGTs also play a central role in advocating for improved rights and complete independence. Through regularly organizing and leading their populations of people, their state of government and control impact their political status and strength.
4. **Regional Organizations:** Regional organizations (such as the African Union, Pacific Islands Forum, and Caribbean Community, alongside many Human Rights Organizations/NGOs)

work to raise awareness about the many injustices occurring within these NSGTs and provide platforms for discussions and resolutions.

Impacts of Colonization

Over the last several decades of colonial rule, NSGTs have faced immense social, economic, political, and cultural changes that have shaped their standard of living. Colonization, to this day, has left a wide range of challenges and problems stunting the growth and development of regions and negatively influencing the lives of thousands of individuals. Many territories and previously colonized countries faced a large disruption of their culture and values and struggled with identity loss and erasure of their indigenous languages, traditions, and cultures. NSGTs and colonies such as in the French Colonial Empire, Portuguese empire, and the Taiwanese under Japanese rule were all forced to assimilate into the cultures of their colonizer, creating a large loss of cultural heritage. Populations were also forced into new social hierarchies and economic classes, marginalizing several thousands of people. By addressing the various impacts of colonization and the large complexity of the issue, NSGTs can further work toward reaching independence and self-determination for the betterment of their people.

Government and Economy

Due to harsh political dynamics and a lack of independence, NSGTs face various governance challenges. Many of these territories struggle to create well-structured and effective government systems to address the economic and social needs of their people. The state of governance in NSGTs often reflects the authority of their administrative power and limited autonomy. While some territories may be able to make their own laws and decisions, others have

close to no self-governance and struggle to voice their opinions within their administrator's government structure. Some NSGTs have Direct Colonial Rule, in which the administering power holds significant control of the legislation and decisions made, with little to no influence from the local population on laws and regulations. An example of this is in Gibraltar, where they are governed by the United Kingdom. Other NSGTs are granted limited self-governance where the local assembly/government has small amounts of authority over sectors such as education and infrastructure, though still lack the right to make critical and national decisions. An example includes Bermuda, which has its own government and largely makes its own decisions but depends on the UK for foreign relations and matters of defense. Other forms of governments in NSGTs include advanced self-governance, interim governments for territories in the process of decolonization, independence movements functioning as de facto governments, and international oversight. Despite the various forms of colonial governments, the one shared detail is that all NSGTs lack the right to full autonomy, full independence, and complete self-governance.

Sovereignty is defined as a government/governing authority possessing full and exclusive control over its territory, people, legislation, and decisions without external influence or interference. Sovereignty is recognized as one of the defining factors of independence and autonomy, as territories are able to make their own decisions and establish international affairs and alliances without the influence of a colonial power. Key aspects of sovereignty include political independence, full jurisdiction of their legal and social systems, decisions of state, national identity, and international recognition. NSGTs hope to gain sovereignty alongside the right to self-determination, though are often unable to due to the control of their

administrative power. Without sovereignty, these territories are subject to resource exploitation, limited autonomy, forced borders, cultural inequalities, land degradation, and economic inequities.

Management Methods	
Indirect Control	Direct Control
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local government officials were used Limited self-rule Goal: to develop future leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foreign officials brought in to rule No self-rule Goal: assimilation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government institutions are based on European styles but may have local rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government institutions are based only on European styles
Examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> British colonies such as Nigeria, India, Burma U.S. colonies on Pacific Islands 	Examples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> French colonies such as Somaliland, Vietnam German colonies such as Tanganyika Portuguese colonies such as Angola

Forms of Imperialism (Robb Schultz)

Government corruption within both colonial powers and NSGTs is a common issue within several territories, due to the lack of government structure and stability. Corruption within NSGTs often further hinders growth and progress. Resource mismanagement is a common result of corrupt political leadership as financial aid, natural resources, and development funds can be taken advantage of, stunting further economic growth and resulting in a large loss of basic necessities and services for the population. Further, government corruption can lead to economic inequities within NSGTs as resources are diverted away from social and welfare programs, infrastructure projects, and public services. Embezzlement and money laundering directly create a lack of development in NSGTs, slowing down any progress being made in NSGTs. Corruption leads to large-scale political instability placing territories in an even more vulnerable state and unable to fight for their decolonization. As political progress is stunted, democratic processes such as elections and fair decision making are also stifled. In order to achieve self-determination, foster sustainable development, and establish autonomy for NSGTs, addressing and eradicating government cor

ruption and economic inequity through improving the access to resources and a stable is critical.

Human Rights Violations in NSGTs

Human Rights Violations and abuse within NSGTs are extremely common, and are large-scale problems rooted deep in power imbalances and historical legacies. One of the largest violations is the suppression of self-determination. Colonial powers often stunt the abilities and rights of the local population by denying the right to self-expression and autonomy. Most populations within NSGTs face political repression and are restricted in their freedom of speech, association, and assembly. Opposition to the regulations and laws of administrative powers by marginalized groups and NSGTs is often met with brutal beat-downs and public arrests. Furthermore, freedom of the press and expression is often a right not available to the majority of inhabitants in NSGTs. There is a large censorship of media and information within NSGTs, that prevents human rights violations occurring in these territories to surface for international reprehension. Media outlets are forced to withhold information for thousands of individuals in NSGTs, ensuring the colonial powers are not exposed for detention of journalists, inadequate standards of living, and other violations. Other violations include the discrimination of indigenous groups, land disputes and forced evictions, and suppression of cultural identity. NSGTs are currently in a vulnerable position as they face challenges in access to education, health-care, clean drinking water, shelter, and other basic necessities.

A prevalent issue within NSGTs is the alarming amount of refugees and displaced peoples, especially in territories such as the Western Sahara. Many populations in these territories are displaced due to

conflict and lack basic services such as protection, self-determination, humanitarian aid. According to a report from February of 2023 by the Human Rights Watch, from 1965 to 1973, the United Kingdom and the United States forced out the entire Chagossian population from the Chagos islands into Mauritius, later abandoning them and leaving them in full poverty (Human Rights Watch, 1). The Human Rights Watch also called the United States and the United Kingdom out for their “crimes against humanity” as they forced the displacement of the Chagossians, persecuted them on racial and ethnic grounds, and prevented their permanent return to their homeland.



Ongoing protests in the Western Sahara

Environmental and Social Issues within NSGTs

Colonizers exploited and extracted the natural resources and commodities of NSGTs for their own economic gain. The extraction of these resources led to environmental degradation, and economic inequalities, overall worsening the development and growth of these territories.

In terms of environmental issues, there are a wide range of problems that serve to negatively impact the well-being of natives and local populations as well as create barriers for the sustainable development of NSGTs. One of the large environmental issues within

these territories is resource exploitation by colonial powers and powerful nations. The immense amounts of resource extraction and exploitation have led to environmental degradation, depletion of raw materials and crucial resources, and large-scale habitat loss. For example, unstable logging practices and cleaning of land have led to deforestation and biodiversity loss, heavily impacting the ecosystems and daily lives of local communities. In Papua New Guinea, the territory has faced significant challenges with logging practices specifically in the context of illegal logging due to the weak enforcement and governance. Furthermore, unsafe and ignorant practices have contributed to climate change and increased vulnerability. Problems such as rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and fluctuating rainfall patterns have impacted many native populations and created discrepancies in local crops and agriculture. This issue alongside waste management contributes to the pollution of land, water, and coastal regions as well as an evidence lack of access to clean and safe drinking water.

Alongside environmental degradation in NSGTs is the wide array of social problems occurring due to the harsh decisions and regulations of colonial powers. Due to economic instability and unstable governments, most NSGTs have limited access to education and healthcare, causing a brain drain as skilled and educated individuals migrate to other countries. This further feeds into the poverty cycle as many struggle with unemployment and are unable to provide for themselves or their family without a stable income. A lack of resources and money also creates a shortage of basic healthcare services for the majority of the population, promoting sickness and health disparities. Additionally, issues including gender inequality, discrimination of indigenous groups, and cultural disruption are common and continue to persist as NSGTs lack self-governance and full independence. Addressing and working to alleviate these problems is crucial to the sustainable development and growth of NSGTs as they work toward decolonization.

PAST UN/IGO RESPONSE

The United Nations has had a relatively robust response to the issue of NSGTs. The Charter itself binds administering Powers to the agreement to recognize the prime importance of the interests of the dependent Territories' inhabitants. It also outlines the need for social, economic, political, and academic progress in the Territories in order to improve forms of self-government ("International Decades"). These Administering Powers are also required under the Charter to report to the United Nations on the

state of their territories so that progress toward their self-determination can be monitored.

The International Trusteeship System found in Chapter XII (Articles 75-85) of the United Nations Charter was established with eleven territories placed under the system. The system was created post-World War II so that trust territories, often colonies or territories controlled by the Axis powers during the war, would have the support they needed to self-govern.

Some key principles of the International Trusteeship System included the promotion of self-government, protection of human rights, and economic development. The Trusteeship Council periodically conducted reviews of the territories and adjusted terms of administration as necessary. Some transitioned out of the system into full self-governance fairly quickly, while others needed more support first. Today, all eleven of these have reached self-determination through independence or free association with an independent State.

In 1960, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on Decolonization, more formally known as the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. This affirms the right to self-determination for all and the need to quickly bring a total end to colonialism. During the post-World War II era, it served as a powerful statement against colonialism when anticolonial sentiments were on the rise. Along the same vein, it helped to mark the beginning of the shift in the global political landscape as colonies and territories gained independence.

In 1962, the General Assembly created the Special Committee on Decolonization, more formally known as the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. This committee oversaw the implementation of the Declaration on Decolonization and created recommendations on its application.

In 1990, the General Assembly adopted a Plan of Action and announced 1990-2000 as the first International Decade for the eradication of Colonialism, with the second and third decade announcements in 2001 and 2011, respectively.

Despite these responses, it is important to acknowledge (1) the presence of 17 remaining NSGTs and (2) the persistence of neocolonial practices in even now freely governing countries. It is crucial to reflect on factors influencing untaken action.

Special Committee on Decolonization (C-24)
 Officially called the "Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence of Colonial Countries and Peoples". Better known as the "C-24".

Establishment

- Established by General Assembly in 1961
- Monitors implementation of Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (GA resolution 1514 (XV))

Mandate

- Examine political, economic & other developments in Non-Self-Governing Territories (NSGTs)
- Review list of NSGTs
- Make recommendations to GA, usually in form of draft resolutions
- Hold annual regional seminars
- Hear statements on NSGTs by representatives & individuals
- Dispatch visiting missions to NSGTs

Membership (29 countries)

Current Bureau

- Chair
- 3 Vice-Chairs
- Rapporteur

Elected in February every year "on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, experience and personal competence."

Annual session

- FEBRUARY** Opening session
- MARCH/APRIL** Second meeting for decision on regional seminar
- MAY** Regional seminar in Pacific or Caribbean
- JUNE** Substantive session (2 weeks)

For more information visit: <https://www.un.org/dsps/decolonization>

The 4th Committee on Decolonization (United Nations)

INTERNATIONAL ACTION AND RESPONSE

Considering the fact that 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories remain to be decolonized, international action is crucial to the empowerment of these marginalized populations. The United Nations Pacific Regional Seminar on Decolonization in 2018 announced a new focus on helping Non-Self-Governing Territories achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This renewed commitment came out of a determination that a larger movement of international collaboration was needed to address each territory's unique challenges.

The committee chair emphasized that the implementation of the SDGs is important for these territories that are disproportionately affected by climate change, inaccessibility of healthcare, economic stag-

nation, and the lack of safe drinking water. United Nations representatives during these discussions highlighted the UN's role in aiding these territories. Those that were highlighted included the Pan American Health Organization/the World Health Organization's strategy regarding technical cooperation alongside the six UK Caribbean Territories and the UN Population Fund's (UNFPA)'s technical assistance towards developing a sexual and reproductive health policy in Anguilla. It later discussed and outlined the allocation of emergency sexual and reproductive health kits to the islands of Turks and Caicos after Hurricane Irma, and the UN Women's activity in the British Virgin Islands and Anguilla on gender-related issues ("UN Committee Focuses on SDG Needs...").

CASE STUDIES

Case 1: Decolonization of the Western Sahara

Key Events

In discussing the issue of determining the overall political status of NSGTs, the Decolonization of the Western Sahara serves as a prime example of the true complexity of territorial disputes. This situation can be traced back to the late 19th century, when the Western Sahara was initially colonized by Spain

(SDG Knowledge Hub, 1). For several decades, the Sahrawi people, the native occupants of the Western Sahara, were forced under harsh rule, economic exploitation, and close to no political participation. In 1973, the Polisario Front was formed as a Sahrawi liberation movement with the prime goal of gaining full independence for the Western Sahara. In 1975, Spain withdrew from the Western Sahara and the Madrid Accords were signed, giving colonial power and control to Morocco and Mauritania. In 1979, Mauritania withdrew from the region, and Morocco

has continued to remain in control of the Western Sahara. The Polisario Front has strongly opposed the transfer of care and has spent the last decades in dispute with Morocco for full independence of the Western Sahara and Sahrawi people. A referendum was held by the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) in 1991 to oversee a proposed referendum regarding the status of the Western Sahara (Al Jazeera, 2). However, the referendum was never implemented due to several debates on who would be eligible to vote. Over the past decades, there have been several failed negotiations and autonomy plans by both sides, though no conclusion has been made as the Polisario Front insists on full independence. Despite many international countries and intergovernmental organizations recognizing the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) as a sovereign state, Morocco does not recognize their sovereignty. Currently, there have been numerous reports of human rights violations and abuses, government corruption, lack of self determination, economic exploitation, environmental degradation, and increasing violence within the Western Sahara due to the ongoing tensions and uncertainty of their political status. Although over a decade-long truce was established by the United Nations since 1991 between Morocco and the SADR, it has not been effective in holding peace or resolving the conflict. Moroccan forces and soldiers currently remain within a 2000 kilometer sand wall, where the administration largely controls the Western Sahara's resources and reserves. In November of 2020, Morocco hosted a military operation in Guerguerat, a United Nations buffer zone village, to remove over 90 peaceful protesters. In response, the Polisario Front with support from Algeria, declared an official end to the ceasefire. With 587,000 people currently suffering within the Western Sahara under Morocco's control, it is essential the crisis comes to a resolution

and solutions are presented to protect the inhabitants of the territory.



Protests of Morocco's actions and statements of the Western Sahara (The London Globalist)

Key Actors

The geopolitics and situation regarding the Western Sahara include several key actors and international entities, each serving their own interests and perspectives within the situation.

The Polisario Front: A Sahrawi nationalist movement founded in 1973, with the essential goal of achieving full independence for Western Sahara and the Sahrawi people. The Polisario Front established the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) which controls a portion of the Western Sahara. Their main ideas follow independence, social justice, and self-governance. They also have a military wing known as the Sahrawi People's Liberation Army which has engaged in guerilla warfare in order to regain control of their territory (BBC News, 3). They have also established refugee camps near Algeria for Sahrawi people who have fled the conflict.

Morocco: Morocco currently holds sovereignty over the Western Sahara and has fought for several

decades to remain in control of the territory. Morocco's solution to the conflict included establishing an autonomy plan for the Sahrawi people to gain high self-governance, though the SADR refused.

Algeria: Algeria has historically shown much support for the SADR and Sahrawi people's right to self-determination. In support of the Sahrawi, they have hosted several refugee camps near Tindouf, provided healthcare, shelter, food, and raised much awareness of the ongoing conflict. Further, Algeria has participated in many regional and international efforts and discussions in order to mediate the issue and find a peaceful solution to the dispute.

United Nations: Since the 1970s, the UN has continued to remain involved in the issue through several different plans including MINURSO and attempts to facilitate ceasefires and negotiations between the parties.

African Union: The AU has also supported many of the efforts by the Western Sahara to gain self-determination and has pushed for both parties to engage in peaceful negotiations.

Current Situation

There has been little progress made in resolving the situation and finding a solution between the two sides, leaving thousands of Sahrawi people in an extremely vulnerable position. The history of the Western Sahara and ongoing disputes over control of its territory has had long-term effects on the inhabitants and native people of the region, as well as the territory's overall stability. In 2020, economic activities in the Western Sahara declined by over 4.4%, creating at least USD 8 billion in output losses and adding 59,000 more people into the extreme poverty

range. Furthermore, over 200,000 Sahrawi people are currently in refugee camps, with limited access to basic resources and necessities such as food, water, shelter, and healthcare.

In terms of government function, the Western Sahara has no freely elected leaders, with the Moroccan parliament, dominated by the monarchy, in control of all government policies regarding the territory. Further, the Moroccan access-to-information laws apply to Western Sahara, meaning information regarding the territory is close to nonexistent. There is also a strong lack of freedom of assembly, as protests and demonstrations are broken up regularly, alongside protestors and supporters of the SADR being publicly beaten and arrested. In July of 2021, Amnesty International released a report documenting the specific targeting of 22 Sahrawi journalists, human rights defenders, and activists by Moroccan security forces and government authorities.

Case 2: The Situation in Gibraltar

Gibraltar is currently one of the most pertinent NSGTs in the fight against colonialism and toward the decolonization process. The situation raises crucial and difficult questions regarding self-determination and the right to sovereignty within NSGTs. Gibraltar is controlled by the United Kingdom as a British Overseas Territory located at the southern tip of the Iberian Peninsula. Gibraltar has been a NSGT under Britain since 1713 under the Treaty of Utrecht, which ceded the territory from Spain to Britain ("Western Sahara: Freedom in the World 2021 Country Report"). Britain took control of the territory, establishing a naval base for the British Royal Navy and controlling the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea. Thus, Gibraltar serves as a key region for trade routes, economic partnerships, and military tactics. Howev

er, throughout the past century, Spain has neglected to accept the cession of Gibraltar to Britain and continues to assert its ownership and dominance over the territory. This has significantly raised tensions between Gibraltar, the United Kingdom, and Spain as they debate the sovereignty of the territory. Throughout history, Spain and other powers have attempted to siege Gibraltar and regain control. A key example is the Great Siege of Gibraltar from 1779 to 1783, in which Spain and France fought to reclaim Gibraltar from the British during the American Revolutionary War (“Gibraltar”).

Due to Gibraltar’s economic importance as the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea, the territory is highly sought after. Over the past decades, Gibraltar has continued to reaffirm their desire for full independence and to begin the decolonization process. While referendums have been held to negotiate their sovereignty, Gibraltar has continued to reject proposals for joint sovereignty between Britain and Spain. This issue has become further complicated due to

Brexit, the United Kingdom’s exit from the European Union. Spain has taken advantage of Brexit and declared it an opportunity to regain control of Gibraltar. However, a study from 2020 reported that 96% of Gibraltarians wanted to remain under the United Kingdom rather than Spain and not give up their sovereignty. Gibraltar as a British Overseas Territory has a high degree of self-governance and is able to utilize its autonomy in local affairs such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure development. The territory has its own government and parliament with the Chief Minister as the head of government. Additionally, the natives and inhabitants of Gibraltar have a strong attachment to their identity and territory and do not want to be under the control of Spain.

Tensions between Spain and the United Kingdom regarding ownership of Gibraltar continue to rise, making the situation much more prevalent. The situation highlights the complex dynamics and geopolitical issues regarding Non-Self Governing Territories and the history of colonialism.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Was your nation ever a NSGT or a colonial power? If so, how has this impacted your country's current political and economic policies? If not, what stance do they hold on NSGTs and how have they contributed to the topic?
2. What current countries were once NSGTs, and how did they gain independence? What obstacles did they overcome and what did the decolonization process look like?
3. Reviewing the current situation within the Western Sahara, what role does the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in the Western Sahara (MINURSO) play in resolving the tensions between the two sides? Would you consider their actions to be successful in aiding the conflict? If not, what can be done to improve their impact?
4. How do geopolitical dynamics (such as political and economic interests, power struggles, regional influence, and globalization) impact alliances and the influence of major powers and their position on the political status of NSGTs?

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