



ACSMUNC IV

GA4: Special Political and Decolonization

Chairs:

Ema Yordanova
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Letter from the Chairs

Dear Delegates,

What a pleasure it is to welcome you to this year's edition of ACSMUNC! We are beyond excited to chair the GA4 this year and we can't wait to not only meet and get to know you, but also to see how you will handle the committee's challenges.

Fitting for SPECPOL, we have selected our topics not only because of the serious global issues that they present, but also with the hope that they will provide grounds for rigorous debate and fascinating discussions throughout the conference. We have prepared this background guide on the topics of Haiti's Gang Violence and the issue of Piracy in the Southern Hemisphere in order to help get you up to speed and give you a concise overview of the problems at hand. These pressing political matters may seem daunting, as they require a great amount of critical thinking, ingenuity, and diplomatic knowledge. However, we are confident that you will rise to the occasion and spark a lively and meaningful debate. We hope, above all, that you'll have a fabulous time regardless of previous experience. We are exceptionally joyful to be leading this committee, and we hope you will enjoy participating just as much!

With great anticipation,

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Background on Gang Violence in Haiti

Overview

Since 2020, Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, has been embroiled in a prolonged gang conflict between two prominent criminal factions: the Revolutionary Forces of the G9 Family and Allies (FRG9 or G9) and the G-Pep. Despite efforts by the Haitian government and security forces, control over the city slipped, with gangs reportedly dominating up to 90% of its territory by 2023. Responding to the intensifying violence, an armed vigilante group called bwa kale emerged to combat the gangs. On October 2, 2023, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 2699, greenlighting a multinational security mission led by Kenya to support Haiti.

By March 2024, gang violence had escalated further, aiming for the resignation of Prime Minister and Acting President Ariel Henry. This culminated in the storming of two prisons, leading to the release of thousands of inmates. Subsequent attacks targeted government institutions, prompting the Haitian government to declare a state of emergency and impose a curfew. On March 11, Henry consented to resign upon the formation of a transitional government.

History of the Issue

Since the 1950s, Haiti has grappled with the entrenched presence of non-state armed groups, a legacy that traces back to the establishment of the Tonton Macoute paramilitaries by the Duvalier dictatorship. These paramilitaries were utilized to violently suppress dissent during François Duvalier's reign. Even after the fall of the dictatorship in 1986, non-state violence persisted, with armed factions evolving and being manipulated by political actors to safeguard their interests, manipulate elections, and quell public unrest.

Efforts to address this issue, such as the disbandment of the Tonton Macoute and the Haitian Army in 1994 by President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, failed to bring about lasting peace due to the absence of disarmament. This failure led to a proliferation of armed groups, as ex-soldiers and former militiamen joined unofficial militant factions. From 1994 to 2004, Port-au-Prince witnessed a de facto anti-Aristide insurgency, with ex-soldiers launching attacks against the government.

In response to the escalating violence, youth established self-defense groups known as *chimères*, which received tacit support from the police and the government, further exacerbating the situation. These youth gangs, initially supported by Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas party, gradually gained control over entire communes, becoming increasingly independent-minded.

The devastating 2010 earthquake exacerbated Haiti's already precarious situation, leading to the emergence of younger, more ruthless gangs that overcame the dominance of older, politically-aligned groups. The earthquake also resulted in mass prison breakouts, further contributing to the rise of armed violence.

Despite the presence of the United Nations peacekeeping operation MINUSTAH, which was established after the 2004 coup d'état, Haiti continued to experience heightened levels of gang-related violence. Following the end of MINUSTAH in October 2017, gang-related violence escalated, culminating in events like the 2018 Port-au-Prince massacre, where 25 civilians were killed.

From 2017 to 2021, Haiti faced a series of compounding crises, including political turmoil, a dysfunctional parliament, deteriorating public administration, and a failing judicial system. Scheduled elections were repeatedly postponed, and the economy suffered under the weight of natural disasters and growing unrest. Gangs seized upon the power vacuum, establishing political influence through cooperative politicians and economic control through extortion, kidnappings, and murders.

Current Status

On February 29, 2024, violence erupted in Haiti as Prime Minister Ariel Henry traveled to Kenya to sign an agreement aimed at circumventing a Kenyan court ruling. Gunfire targeted the main airport and businesses, with two police stations seized. Several nations pledged troops to support Haiti's security, with Benin committing the largest force. Gang leader Jimmy Chérizier vowed to prevent Henry's return. Over 4,700 inmates escaped during attacks on two prisons. Gangs demanded Henry's resignation, and violence forced a state of emergency and curfew. By March 4, armed gangs targeted the airport, government buildings, and the national bank. The UN Secretary-General called for urgent action, while Henry attempted to return amid escalating violence. US and EU evacuated diplomatic staff. Attacks continued, including on vital infrastructure like the port, prompting extended states of emergency and curfews. International efforts intensified, with meetings convened and promises of support. Amid mounting pressure, Henry announced his resignation on March 12. Violence persisted, with gang leaders killed in clashes.

Country and Bloc Positions

Haiti

Haiti finds itself embroiled in a harrowing and complex struggle against escalating gang warfare within its borders. Despite efforts by successive governments and international interventions, the situation remains dire, with gangs exerting significant control over parts of the country, particularly in the capital, Port-au-Prince. The presence of armed factions, often with historical ties to political regimes and external influences, has led to widespread violence, including attacks on infrastructure, law enforcement, and innocent civilians. The government of Haiti, alongside its security forces, has grappled with the daunting challenge of restoring order and stability, yet faces numerous obstacles, including limited resources, institutional weaknesses, and entrenched corruption. The gang war not only threatens the safety and livelihoods of Haitian citizens but also undermines efforts for socio-economic development and political stability, exacerbating the country's already profound challenges.

United States of America

While the U.S. has refrained from direct military intervention, it has engaged diplomatically and pledged financial support to multinational efforts aimed at restoring order and assisting the Haitian government. Additionally, the U.S. has taken steps to safeguard its citizens and interests, evacuating embassy staff and considering measures to address potential security threats, including the possibility of maritime migration from Haiti.

CARICOM

As an organization comprising several Caribbean nations, CARICOM has called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and a peaceful resolution to the crisis through dialogue and diplomacy. Emphasizing the importance of upholding democratic principles and the rule of law, CARICOM has urged all parties to respect human rights and work towards restoring stability and security in Haiti. Additionally, CARICOM has offered humanitarian assistance and support to the Haitian government, while advocating for international cooperation to address the root causes of the conflict and promote long-term peace and development in the country.

Kenya

As a key participant in efforts to address the crisis, Kenya has taken decisive action by leading a multinational security support mission authorized by the United Nations. This demonstrates Kenya's willingness to contribute troops and police officers to assist the Haitian government in restoring order and combating the gangs responsible for the violence. Kenya's involvement underscores its role as a responsible global actor and its dedication to supporting stability and development in conflict-affected regions. Additionally, Kenya has engaged in diplomatic efforts to coordinate with other nations and international organizations to address the root causes of the conflict and promote sustainable peace in Haiti.

Benin

Benin has pledged the largest contingent of troops among several nations to support the multinational security support mission authorized by the United Nations.

Conclusion

Questions you might want to consider throughout the conference

- Does the situation in Haiti have any resemblance, be it historic or contemporary, to what is going on in your delegation's country? Think in social, political and economic aspects.
- To what extent, if at all, is your country involved in the problem?
- What statements have officials from your country made regarding this issue?
- What are possible solutions which your delegation might propose?

Delegates should keep in mind that this study guide is by no means exhaustive of the issue. It is simply the first step to be taken toward adequate preparation. To prepare sufficiently for the conference, delegates should further explore the topic and their nation's stance on the issue using the questions provided as a guide. Furthermore, the issue is rapidly developing, so remain engaged and updated on the situation as it unfolds in the weeks leading up to the conference.

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Background to the Challenge of Pirates in the Southern Hemisphere

Introduction

Piracy in the Southern Hemisphere represents a multifaceted challenge with far-reaching implications for maritime security, economic stability, and regional cooperation. The proliferation of piracy activities in regions such as the Gulf of Guinea, Southeast Asia, and the Indian Ocean underscores the urgent need for concerted international action. This background guide provides delegates of the General Assembly Fourth Committee (GA4) with a comprehensive analysis of the complex dynamics surrounding piracy in the Southern Hemisphere and offers actionable recommendations to address this pressing issue.

Current Situation

Piracy remains a persistent threat in the Southern Hemisphere, with various maritime routes and coastal areas susceptible to illicit activities. According to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), incidents of piracy, including attacks on vessels, hijackings, and crew kidnappings, continue to occur, albeit with fluctuations in frequency and intensity. The Gulf of Guinea, known for its high incidence of piracy incidents, has emerged as a particularly vulnerable region, with criminal syndicates exploiting weak governance structures and porous maritime borders.

In Southeast Asia, the Malacca Strait and the waters surrounding Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines experience a significant number of piracy-related incidents, ranging from armed robbery to vessel hijackings. Despite efforts to enhance maritime security through joint patrols and information sharing

mechanisms, challenges persist in effectively deterring pirate activities and ensuring the safety of maritime traffic.

Similarly, the Indian Ocean remains a hotspot for piracy, with the waters off the coast of Somalia historically plagued by piracy attacks targeting commercial vessels and humanitarian aid shipments. While international naval coalitions have made significant strides in suppressing piracy off the Horn of Africa, ongoing instability in Somalia and the surrounding region continues to pose challenges to long-term maritime security efforts.

Root Causes

The prevalence of piracy in the Southern Hemisphere can be attributed to a confluence of underlying factors, including poverty, political instability, weak governance, and inadequate maritime law enforcement capabilities. In regions such as the Gulf of Guinea, socioeconomic disparities and marginalization of coastal communities exacerbate the vulnerability of maritime routes to criminal exploitation. Furthermore, corruption and state fragility in certain countries provide fertile ground for illicit activities, allowing pirate networks to operate with impunity. In addition to socioeconomic factors, geopolitical tensions and maritime territorial disputes contribute to maritime insecurity in the Southern Hemisphere. Competing claims over resource-rich waters, coupled with historical grievances and unresolved conflicts, create conditions conducive to piracy and maritime crime. Addressing the root causes of piracy requires a holistic approach that encompasses governance reforms, socio economic development, and enhanced maritime law enforcement capabilities.

International Law/Maritime Security

International efforts to combat piracy in the Southern Hemisphere are guided by a robust framework of maritime laws, conventions, and resolutions aimed at safeguarding the freedom of navigation and ensuring the security of maritime trade routes. Key legal instruments include the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which delineates the rights and responsibilities of states in the maritime domain, and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) conventions, which establish standards for maritime safety, security, and environmental protection.

Furthermore, the United Nations Security Council has issued several resolutions authorizing international naval interventions to combat piracy, particularly off the coast of Somalia. Resolution 1518 (2003) and subsequent resolutions have granted member states the authority to take measures to suppress piracy and armed robbery at sea, including entering Somali territorial waters and using necessary force to counter pirate attacks.

In addition to international legal frameworks, regional organizations play a vital role in promoting maritime security and combating piracy in the Southern Hemisphere. Initiatives such as the Yaoundé Code of Conduct, adopted by countries in the Gulf of Guinea region, seek to enhance maritime law enforcement cooperation and facilitate joint patrols to address piracy and maritime crime.

Stakeholders/Actors

Addressing piracy in the Southern Hemisphere requires coordinated action among a diverse array of stakeholders, including national governments, naval forces, international organizations, shipping companies, and coastal communities.

National governments play a central role in formulating policies and allocating resources to combat piracy within their respective maritime jurisdictions. Naval forces, including coast guards and maritime law enforcement agencies, are tasked with patrolling maritime routes, conducting surveillance operations, and responding to piracy incidents as they arise. International organizations such as the United Nations, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and regional bodies provide coordination mechanisms, technical assistance, and capacity-building support to enhance maritime security in piracy-affected regions.

Shipping companies and maritime industry stakeholders have a vested interest in protecting their assets and personnel from piracy threats. Through initiatives such as the Best Management Practices (BMP) for Protection against Somali Piracy, shipping companies implement risk mitigation measures, such as onboard security teams, safe navigation practices, and information sharing protocols, to minimize the vulnerability of vessels to pirate attacks.

Coastal communities, particularly those in piracy-affected regions, are often on the front lines of maritime insecurity, facing threats to their livelihoods, safety, and well-being. Empowering coastal communities through socioeconomic development initiatives, education, and community engagement can help build resilience against piracy and mitigate the drivers of maritime crime.

Challenges and Obstacles

Despite concerted efforts to combat piracy in the Southern Hemisphere, several challenges persist, hindering the effectiveness of maritime security initiatives. These challenges include:

Limited Maritime Law Enforcement Capabilities: Many countries in the Southern Hemisphere lack the resources, infrastructure, and capacity to effectively patrol their

maritime territories and respond to piracy incidents. Inadequate funding, training, and equipment further undermine efforts to combat maritime crime and protect maritime assets.

Transnational Nature of Maritime Crime: Piracy is inherently transnational in scope, with criminal networks operating across multiple jurisdictions and exploiting legal loopholes to evade detection and prosecution. Coordination among affected countries, international organizations, and regional actors is essential to disrupt pirate networks and dismantle their operations.

Corruption and Governance Challenges: Corruption within maritime law enforcement agencies, judicial systems, and government institutions undermines efforts to combat piracy and impede the delivery of justice. Addressing institutional corruption, promoting transparency, and strengthening the rule of law are critical components of sustainable maritime security strategies.

Geopolitical Tensions and Territorial Disputes: Maritime territorial disputes and geopolitical rivalries in the Southern Hemisphere exacerbate maritime insecurity and complicate efforts to coordinate regional responses to piracy. Competing claims over resource-rich waters, unresolved conflicts, and historical grievances contribute to instability and create opportunities for pirate groups to exploit maritime vulnerabilities.

Humanitarian Concerns and Respect for Human Rights: Pirate attacks often result in the loss of life, injury, or abduction of crew members, posing humanitarian challenges and raising concerns about the protection of human rights at sea. Ensuring the safety and well-being of seafarers, enhancing emergency response mechanisms, and facilitating the repatriation of kidnapped crew members are essential aspects of piracy mitigation efforts.

Previous Efforts and Initiatives

Over the years, numerous initiatives and interventions have been undertaken to address piracy in the Southern Hemisphere, with varying degrees of success. Key efforts include:

Capacity Building and Training Programs: International organizations and donor countries have supported capacity-building initiatives aimed at enhancing the maritime law enforcement capabilities of affected countries in the Southern Hemisphere. These programs provide training, technical assistance, and equipment to strengthen coast guard capabilities, improve maritime surveillance systems, and bolster port security measures.

Public-Private Partnerships: Collaboration between governments, industry stakeholders, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has facilitated the development of best practices and industry standards for piracy prevention and risk mitigation. Public-private partnerships, such as the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS), serve as platforms for dialogue, information sharing, and coordination among relevant stakeholders.

Legal Frameworks and Prosecution Mechanisms: Efforts to combat piracy are supported by international legal frameworks, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which provides the legal basis for prosecuting pirates and adjudicating piracy-related cases. Regional initiatives, such as the Djibouti Code of Conduct, aim to strengthen legal frameworks and promote cooperation in prosecuting maritime crimes in the Gulf of Aden and Western Indian Ocean.

Community Engagement and Socioeconomic Development: Community-based initiatives and development projects play a crucial role in addressing the root causes of piracy and building resilience in piracy-affected communities. Programs focusing

on poverty alleviation, education, vocational training, and alternative livelihoods empower coastal populations and reduce their susceptibility to recruitment by pirate groups.

Despite these efforts, challenges remain in achieving sustainable progress in combating piracy in the Southern Hemisphere. Lessons learned from previous initiatives underscore the importance of adaptive and context-specific approaches that prioritize local ownership, cooperation among stakeholders, and long-term investments in maritime security infrastructure and capacity building.

Potential Solutions and Recommendations

Addressing piracy in the Southern Hemisphere requires a multifaceted and holistic approach that encompasses diplomatic, legal, economic, and security measures.

Delegates are encouraged to consider the following recommendations:

Enhancing Maritime Law Enforcement Capabilities: Strengthening the maritime law enforcement capacities of affected countries through training, technical assistance, and resource mobilization to improve maritime surveillance, interdiction, and prosecution of pirate activities.

Promoting Regional Cooperation and Information Sharing: Facilitating greater cooperation among affected countries, regional organizations, and international partners to share information, intelligence, and best practices in combating piracy, including joint patrols, intelligence fusion centers, and cross-border law enforcement operations.

Addressing Root Causes of Piracy: Investing in socioeconomic development programs, poverty alleviation initiatives, and governance reforms to address the underlying drivers of piracy, promote inclusive growth, and enhance the resilience of coastal communities to maritime insecurity.

Strengthening Legal Frameworks and Prosecution Mechanisms: Supporting efforts to strengthen national legal frameworks, enhance legal capacity building, and facilitate regional cooperation in prosecuting maritime crimes, including piracy, armed robbery at sea, and illicit trafficking.

Promoting Public-Private Partnerships: Encouraging collaboration between governments, shipping companies, maritime industry stakeholders, and civil society organizations to develop and implement comprehensive piracy prevention strategies, share risk information, and support victim assistance and recovery efforts.

Fostering Dialogue and Conflict Resolution: Supporting diplomatic initiatives, mediation efforts, and conflict resolution mechanisms to address underlying geopolitical tensions, territorial disputes, and governance challenges that contribute to maritime insecurity in the Southern Hemisphere.

Empowering Coastal Communities: Investing in community-based initiatives, education programs, vocational training, and alternative livelihood opportunities to empower coastal populations, reduce vulnerability to exploitation by pirate groups, and promote sustainable development in piracy-affected areas.

The challenge of piracy in the Southern Hemisphere demands a coordinated and sustained response from the international community, anchored in principles of cooperation, dialogue, and respect for international law. By working together to address the root causes of piracy, strengthen maritime law enforcement capabilities, and promote regional cooperation, delegates have the opportunity to advance meaningful solutions that enhance maritime security, safeguard maritime trade routes, and promote peace and stability in the Southern Hemisphere.

Conclusion

Before continuing further, we would like to ask all delegates to carefully look at the facts, and consider the following questions:

- What are, if any, the legislations in your country?
- What is the significance of piracy as it pertains to your country and any international groups it may be part of – what are the social, political and economic ramifications of it?
- What has your country done to address the issue?
- What are possible solutions to the issue?

This study guide is by no means exhaustive on the issue of piracy in the Southern hemisphere, and we suggest that all delegates should research the topic further and their nation stances and likely actions. We would like you to consider what impact this issue has on your country and what impact your country has on the issue.

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