

**Houston Area
Model United Nations
Specialized Committee**



BHOC

**Chair | Aruna Muthupillai
Specialized Committee Background Guide
Houston Area Model United Nations 48
February 2-3, 2023**

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Note to Delegates

Delegates,

My name is Aruna Muthupillai and I am very excited to serve as your BHOC chair this year at HAMUN 48! I am currently a student at the University of Texas double majoring in Plan II Honors and International Relations/Global Studies with a potential minor in sustainability.

As you may already know, this year is the first time in 2 years that HAMUN will be in-person and I cannot be more delighted to be a part of this conference again. I sincerely hope that you will take full advantage of the various opportunities that a “real” conference provides. However, if any of you are nervous about the prospect of participating in front of other people, don’t worry. I know how you feel. My first year in HAMUN, I was petrified of the idea of public speaking and probably spoke a grand total of 2 sentences. Not to be cliché but with experience, everything gets easier. After pushing myself to work harder, I went on to become the President of Glenda Dawson MUN and win Best Delegate three times in a row at HAMUN.

Therefore as your chair, I encourage you to step outside of your comfort zone this year and set concrete goals that you would like to accomplish. Whether it be giving one speech during conference or leading a block, I want you to strive to be the best delegate that you can be.

What makes this year even more fun is that BHOC is a “special” specialized committee. Since we will be emulating the spirit and some of the practices within the BHOC, I look forward to seeing both your adaptability and problem-solving initiative as a delegate. As a chair, I value integrity so come into conference with an open mind but make sure to stay true to the identity of your character! Our topics regarding the possibility of Scottish Independence and the ongoing migrant crisis are both extremely serious topics; so while I do not mind a bit of fun, please make sure to respect the sensitivity of the issues at hand and the office of which you are representing.

Now, as a last bit of advice, come into conference prepared but don’t worry too much about “winning” or “losing.” Something that I always teach my delegates is that the best delegate brings out the best in other delegates. So take every opportunity to jump up and speak, but also encourage others to do the same. Push to have your ideas heard, but also be willing to compromise and create a better solution. Last of all, be competitive but not at the expense of collaboration.

Best of luck and I look forward to seeing you all in action!

Aruna Muthupillai

Chair of BHOC

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SPECIAL PROCEDURE

We will follow **standard Parliamentary Procedure** during the majority of debate. However, as delegates are already sorted into political parties, debate will be shorter to make time for the introduction/voting on of bills.

Standard procedure for:

- Motion to open debate
- Motion to set the topic
- Motion to open a Speaker's List
- Moderated Caucuses
- Unmoderated Caucuses
- Points (Inquiry, Order, Personal Privilege)

However, once "bills (resolutions)" are created, they are then introduced to parliament. This is where we will **integrate some parts of British House of Commons procedures.**

In the British House of Commons, motions are used to introduce bills and begin debating. In our case, MPs must make a motion in order to begin debate on their bill.

- "I move that we begin to discuss _____"

In order for the motion to reach the floor, the motion must be seconded by another MP. The second can come from anyone in the room and the MP that seconds does not have to be recognized by the Chair to second.

- "Seconded!"

Then, the Chair (or the Speaker) must repeat the motion and then all MPs may discuss the bill.

- "It is moved and seconded that we discuss _____"

To speak on the motion, MPs must be called upon by the chair to speak. The structure of debate over a bill is in the form of questioning (those that introduced or created the bill stand at the front of the assembly to present the bill then other MPs ask questions). As debate on the bill progresses, the MPs who created the bill may amend the bill on the floor by 1. Inserting 2. Striking or 3. Substituting with the permission of those that created the bill.

SPECIAL PROCEDURE

Once the debate has exhausted (~30 mins), the Chair will put the motion to the vote. Every MP must vote audibly with either “AYE” or “NAY.”

Should the bill have majority “AYE,” the bill will be “adopted.”

The committee will then move onto the next bill. Once all bills are discussed, there will be a standard motion to close debate. The committee will then move onto the next topic.

What to Expect Coming In...

You will be seated in accordance with your party on either the right side or left side of the room. The majority party will be seated on the right with the Prime Minister in the center. On the left, opposition leaders will be seated at the front of their respective parties. The Chair will be seated at the front-center and MPs will stand to make motions and debate from where they are seated. Opening speeches will be made at the front.

Format of Bills:

Sponsors:

Signatories:

Title:

Whereas, The... (the first preamble clause).

Whereas, The... (the last preamble clause).

Resolved, That...(States the action to be taken).

Resolved, That...(States further action to be taken).

Resolved, That...(States still further action to be taken).

****Special Note

Truss has resigned. Rishi Sunak will act as the new PM while Liz Truss will act as just another Conservative PM.



Photograph: UK Parliament



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BHOC

BHOC stands for the British House of Commons. The House of Commons is the lower house in the Parliament of the United Kingdom. In contrast to the upper house (The House of Lords), the House of Commons is popularly elected. Aiming to represent over 68 million British Citizens, the House of Commons consists of 650 Members of Parliament (MPs)

BHOC dates back to the second half of 13th century England. Although the House of Lords was originally the more powerful house, as Britain has democratized, the House of Commons has gradually taken on more power than the House of Lords. Under the Parliament Acts of 1911 and 1949, the House of Lords now only has the power to delay legislation. Furthermore, the House of Commons also has more power (in practice) than the sovereign. In fact, the last time a sovereign rejected a bill was in 1707.

The House of Commons is the effective legislative authority in Great Britain. It alone has the right to impose taxes and control funding. However, the right to declare war still remains with the monarch. Almost all legislation proceeds from the majority party in the Commons, which forms the government and the cabinet; the latter is composed of senior ministers chosen by, and belonging to the party of, the Prime Minister (PM), nearly all of whom serve in the House of Commons. Currently, the PM Liz Truss belongs to the Conservative Party. It is also important to note that since the Fixed Terms Parliament Act of 2011, general elections are held every 5 years. However, at any time before the 5 year maximum, the present government can call elections.



HOUSE OF COMMONS



Topic A: The UK Migrant Crisis

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2022 alone, more than 33,500 migrants crossed into the United Kingdom through the English Channel. However, in 2020 it was only 8,404. According to official statistics, in the first half of 2022, of migrants 18% came from Albania, 18% from Afghanistan, and 15% from Iran. A majority of these individuals crossed the border in order to seek asylum within the United Kingdom.

However, the UK has been struggling to accommodate this rapid influx of asylum-seekers. As of 2019, an estimated 388,000 foreign-born people living in the UK originally came to the UK to seek asylum, according to the Migration Observatory analysis of the Labour Force Survey. Furthermore, as global conflict increases, the UK is facing the burden of increasing its refugee capacity.

To make matters worse, asylum backlog has increased substantially. Although asylum is granted around 59% of the time (an increase over the years), due to an increase in applications, applications are taking longer to process. On 31 December 2021, there were around 101,000 people awaiting an initial decision on their asylum claim (including main applicants and dependants) – a more than ten-fold increase on the number awaiting an initial decision in 2010.





Topic A: The UK Migrant Crisis

TOPIC HISTORY

Modern day immigration control can be traced to the end of the 19th century and the growth of Eastern European Jews entering the UK after fleeing Russian persecution. Over concerns regarding the rising number of foreign national criminals, the **Aliens Act of 1905** was established. The act pioneered the idea of “undesirable” individuals that could be expelled from the country.

Following this start, the UK continued to establish new immigration reform. During the First and Second World War, increased restrictions were placed on migrants entering the UK. During World War II, large numbers of Dutch and Belgian refugees were temporarily placed in camps on Brownsea Island in Poole harbour.

Following the war, **The Polish Resettlement Act 1947** allowed 200,000 Polish citizens to stay following the war and it took until

1952 for the wartime restrictions on travel between the UK and Ireland to be abolished. Subsequently, a **Common Travel Area** was created between all the islands which still exists today.

Legislation regarding refugees has also changed. Originally intended to encompass only European refugees, the **1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons** extended refugee status to all countries as overlapping waves of refugees had to be dealt with in the wake of the Suez Crisis and Hungarian Revolution of 1956.

By the end of the 1960s, immigration had expanded beyond control. Thus, the **Immigration Act of 1971** (the fundamental basis for modern UK immigration policy) was established. The act introduced the concept of patriality or right of abode. It was also partly passed to legally clarify the rights of Commonwealth citizens within the United Kingdom in preparation for membership of the European Communities (EC) in which the United Kingdom would become a member state in 1973.



Topic A: The UK Migrant Crisis

ASYLUM SEEKERS



Photograph: Guy Corbishley

Coming into the 21st century, the UK Immigration Service faced a new challenge: the growth of asylum seekers entering through the Channel Tunnel. Subsequently, immigration services created additional temporary detention centers. However, opponents argued that such centers criminalized asylum seekers. This argument is still referenced today.

By the early 2000s, increased concerns with organized crime/terrorism created a new social dynamic. The government subsequently took a “carrot stick” approach to drive asylum seekers down. The **Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002**

removed access to support for destitute asylum seekers who did not claim asylum immediately upon arrival), and incentivized traditional immigration pathways by relaxing the rules on those coming to work. Part of the act was repealed due to concerns that cutting off support breached **Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights**.

To hold immigration services more accountable and maximize resources, the **Border and Immigration Agency** was created in 2007.



Photograph: EuroMed Monitor



Topic A: The UK Migrant Crisis

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Recently, questions about migration have arisen as global conflicts continue to force people out of their homes.

The Ukrainian Response

Although the British government was quick to offer humanitarian assistance to Ukraine following the onset of the war (including but not limited to £220 million pledged to the effort), the government's response to Ukrainian refugees has sparked outcry.

While the European Union quickly rolled out a temporary protection status for Ukrainian refugees, the UK has only awarded refugee placement/visas to individuals who have family members in the UK or those that can find sponsorship under the **Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme**. Furthermore, all refugees must apply for a visa in advance—something that other European countries are not requiring.

The UK's relative lack of urgency in aiding Ukrainians has not gone unnoticed by its European allies, with French President Emmanuel Macron questioning Britain's "grand statements" in the face of Britain "not welcoming Ukrainian refugees." Domestically, polls show a large majority of the public is in favour of admitting significant numbers of Ukrainians urgently. The Financial Times described the UK's refugee policy as "shameful", while several refugee charities have slammed the government's plans as vague and insufficient.

The Rwanda Plan

As of 2022, the UK has continued to establish increasingly creative plans to handle asylum seekers.

On 14 April 2022, the UK government officially announced that it is going to send people who arrive in the UK to seek asylum to the Republic of Rwanda.



Topic A: The UK Migrant Crisis

In a speech introducing the policy – known formally as the **Migration and Economic Development Partnership** – former Prime Minister Boris Johnson said that, “anyone entering the UK illegally – as well as those who have arrived illegally since January 1st – may now be relocated to Rwanda.”

Under the scheme, the UK’s legal responsibilities for such people would end once they have been relocated to the east African country. They will not be able to apply for asylum in the UK. Instead, they will be able to apply for asylum in Rwanda and have their claims processed there, within Rwanda’s asylum system. If such asylum applicants are successful, they will be offered protection in Rwanda, with no option to return to the UK. To facilitate the plan, the UK will send £120 million up-front to Rwanda.

However, the plan has faced severe criticism. Notably, UNHCR claims that the plan “will externalize the UK’s fundamental obligations to people seeking asylum in the country...and risks the arbitrary denial of access to asylum and lacks realistic durable solutions for the refugees affected.”

Several asylum seekers, the PCS union and charities including Care4Calais and Detention Action are challenging the legality of the policy, with court hearings set for September and October 2022.

With the UK expecting to receive up to 60,000 people by small boat this year – double last year’s record – the UK is scrambling to find viable solutions.

Rising Nationalism

Recently, nationalism drove the controversial Brexit vote. As the government continues to grapple with migration, it does so in a society of increased nationalism, division, and conflicting regional identities.



Photograph: Gareth Fuller/PA



Topic A: The UK Migrant Crisis

PARTY STANCES

The Conservative Party

The spearheaders of the controversial Rwanda plan, the Conservative Party employs a “Britain First” approach to immigration/migration. They plan introducing a “firmer and fairer Australian-style points-based immigration system’ so that decisions on who can come to the UK will be made ‘on the basis of the skills they have and the contribution they can make”.

The Labour Party

Labour’s key theme is to create a more ‘humane immigration system’. In its manifesto the party has proposed to scrap the Immigration Act 2014 and end the financial requirement for family visas among other policies. The Labour Party is largely focused and concerned with costs associated with current migrant strategies.

The Liberal Democrats

The Liberal Democrats are the party that was most staunchly opposed to Brexit. They intend to create a “compassionate and effective” immigration system which removes excessive immigration powers away from the Home Office and prioritizes the dignity of migrants.

The Democratic Unionists

The Democratic Unionist party is a unionist and loyalist political party in Northern Ireland. Thus, it does not have a strong focus on immigration. Nonetheless, the party has expressed the desire for stricter border controls but a recognition for the contributions of immigrants.

Scottish National Party

Against current Tory policies. Wants to call on the UK Government to introduce a fair and humane asylum and refugee system where people have the right to work and to contribute to society, and to lift the harmful restrictions caused by No Recourse to Public Funds. Wants an approach to immigration which benefits Scotland’s needs.



Topic A: The UK Migrant Crisis

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Does the UK have a responsibility to provide asylum to migrants?
- How would constituents react to any new policies that YOU create?
- Does the UK have the capacity to continue accepting migrants?
- What are other countries doing about their migrant dilemmas?
- Should the UK re-examine its current migrant/asylum policies and strategies?
- Is offering humanitarian aid a sufficient way to address global crises?



Photograph: GARETH FULLER/PA

Character List:

Conservative Party:

Rishi Sunak
Liz Truss
Grant Shapps
Domonic Raab
Mr Alister Jack
Priti Patel
Ben Wallace
Shailesh Vara
Sir Robert Buckland
Kit Malhouse
Steve Barclay
Kwasi Kwarteng
Anne-Marie Trevelyan

Labour Party:

Keir Starmer
Anneliese Dodds
Kate Osborne
Liz Twist
Ian Murray
Shabana Mahmood
Rachel Reeves
David Lammy
John Healey
Jo Stevens
Mark Tami

Democratic Unionists

Jeffery Donaldson
Gregory Campbell
Paul Girvan
Michelle Gildernew
Paul Maskey

Scottish National Party

Ian Blackford
Kirsten Oswald
Richard Thomson
Alison Thewliss
Stuart McDonald
Drew Hendry
Philippa Whitford
David Linden

Liberal Democrats:

Ed Davey
Daisy Cooper
Christine Jardine
Alistar Carmichael
Layla Moran
Wendy Chamberlain
Sarah Olbey



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