# Houston Area Model United Nations
## Standard Committee

# PRESS CORPS




Chair | Gissel Cardenas
Houston Area Model United Nations 52
February 4 & 5, 2027

# Chair Letter

**Delegates,**

Welcome to the 52nd Annual Houston Area Model United Nations Conference! I hope you are excited for the upcoming weekend, which promises to be full of new and thrilling memories as you participate in one of the state's largest diplomatic conferences! I look forward to serving you all as the chair of Press Corps, and I hope to make it one of the best experiences you have had so far!

Press Corps is a very unique committee, as your primarily focus will be on news coverage of your assigned committees through news articles and breaking news. You will be given them complete freedom to exercise your freedom of speech (while still maintaining utmost decorum and a code of ethics) to provide readers with the most credible information, and possibly even cause a stir in the committee! Press Corps is meant to help you improve your skills and contribute to your journey in becoming a great journalist. This committee will never be centered on winning awards, but always on learning something new.

It is expected that journalists adhere to ethical standards, submit their articles on time, and put their best foot forward. So, please do your best, and I look forward to meeting you all!



**Gissel Cardenas**
Chair of PRESS CORPS
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# What is Press Corps?

**The Press Corps Committee** is unlike any other at Model United Nations. Here, students step into the shoes of journalists representing global news agencies. Instead of drafting resolutions or giving speeches about a country's policy stance, Press delegates sit in on their assigned committees to investigate and report. The mission of this committee is to capture the essence of debate as it takes place. Delegates shine a light on what is being discussed and how it affects relationships between countries throughout the conference.

**What should delegates expect?**

As a PRESS delegate, students will be expected to report with accuracy and creativity. This involves being present during committee sessions to investigate and report on the discussions taking place. PRESS delegates must conduct interviews with delegates in their committees to gather statements for their articles. They may also host press conferences, where they can question committee delegates on their actions, alliances, and previous statements.

In PRESS, the experience of being a reporter goes beyond writing. Students will learn to balance deadlines and fast changing dynamics within committees. They may encounter evasive answers, misleading information, and even reluctance to cooperate. However, delegates must find ways to overcome those obstacles while staying loyal to their assigned news agency.

By the end of the weekend, delegates will walk away with practical critical thinking and communications skills, which is something that serves journalists, diplomats, and leaders alike.

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# Submissions

**REQUIRED SUBMISSIONS**

1. One News Article (250 words max)

2. One written Interview (3 max)

3. Breaking news throughout the sessions. (1 minimum) (3 max)

**RECOMMENDED (but not required)**

1. Press Conference (with committee chair(s) permission)

2. Opinion Editorial (350 words max) (refrain subjectivity)

Next are listed the types of write-ups the journalists can/are expected to submit by the end of each day. The only exception will be for the last day of the conference, when submissions will be turned in by the end of the first committee session.

**NEWS ARTICLES:**

News articles will contain information about what happens during the committee session. Reports should be written in the format followed by the assigned news agency.

**OPINION EDITORIALS::**

Op-ed reflects an individual's views on a topic. Reporters must find and verify facts, along with explore different perspectives to support their articles.

**INTERVIEWS**:

Reporters are expected to interview prominent delegates. They should ask questions that provide insight on the committee and support their articles.

**PRESS CONFERENCES**:

Press conferences typically take place after directives draft resolutions have passed. Reporters will act like actual journalists and question delegates over their proposed resolution clauses.

# Do’s and Don'ts

1. **PLAGIARISM**

Students should not indulge in plagiarism of any sort. Any article that is submitted must be original work.

**2. AI USE**

Reporters should not use AI to generate any of their work. AI use is strictly limited to grammar checking.

**3. DO NOT USE CONTRACTIONS**

Do not use contractions like can’t, don’t, etc. Expand them, it helps to increase your word count and appears more formal.

**4. CONSISTENCY**

Stick to one tense throughout the article. Ideally, use past tense.

**5. PROFESSIONALISM**

Reporters must adhere to all basic ethical norms. Reporters are to remain unbiased and represent the interest of their assigned Media Outlet.

**6. PUNCTUATION AND CAPITALIZATION**

Articles should be properly punctuated. Reporters’ performance will be marked down if their submissions are not written properly. Only commonly accepted abbreviations can be capitalized.

**7. ACRONYMS**

For the use of abbreviations in your articles, remember to expand the first time and use the abbreviations thereafter.

**8. TITLE EXPANSION**

The titles mentioned in your text should not be abbreviated. For example, Secretary-General should not become Sec-Gen.

**9. QUOTING**

All quotations used in the article should mention the source it has been derived from. If only a part of a sentence is being used, then ellipses (...) should be used to indicate that.

# Do's and Don'ts

**10. NUMBERS**

Numbers up to ten and multiples of ten up to a hundred should be written in words and not in digits (unless a date or year is mentioned). For example, "I turn twenty in 2016." However, decimals, percentages, and roman numerals can be used as and when required.

**11. REFERENTIAL DEFERENCE**

The standard UN country and organization names should be used when referring to any nation or organization. For example, Use China instead of using "The People's Republic of China."

**12. DON'T FORGET!!**

Please do not forget to carry your laptop, notepad, and pens. Internet may or may not be available all the time, so plan ahead with hotspots!

**13.FORMAT**

Submit articles in the following format:

**Font**: Times New Roman, Cambria
**Title Size**: Cambria, (20in)
**Body Size**: Times new Roman, (12in)

Brownie points will be awarded if a catchy byline and an illustration (a photograph, a cartoon, or a statistical representation) accompany the article.

ALL articles will be submitted on google docs, through email. The chair and vice chair must be given FULL permissions on the documents.

# Tips from the Chair

**Journalists should be honest, fair, and courageous in gathering, reporting, and interpreting information. Journalists should:**

1. Always question sources' motives before promising anonymity. Clarify conditions attached to any promise made in exchange for information. Keep promises.

2. Make sure that headlines, news teases, promotional material, photos, video, audio, graphics, sound bites, and quotations do not misrepresent. They should not oversimplify or highlight incidents out of context.

3. Never distort the content of news photos or videos.

4. Avoid undercover or other surreptitious methods of gathering information, except when traditional open methods will not yield information essential to the public. The use of such methods should be explained as part of the story.

6. Avoid stereotyping by race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, or social status.

7. Support the open exchange of views, even views they find objectionable.

8. Give voice to the voiceless; official and unofficial sources of information can be equally valid.

# Sample Articles

*From Harvard National Model UN 2019*

## What's China's Next Move on the Rohingya Crisis?

February 16, 2019

HRC—Religious and racial conflicts lie at the center of the Rohingya crisis. The majority of Rohingya people in Myanmar believe in Muslims, an identity that could be used to label them as threats to the nation. Myanmar is a Buddhist country, which makes the Rohingyas pagans in the eyes of prominent political and religious figures. They are at their most vulnerable: stripped of their citizenship, their homes burned down, their lives threatened, and their voice muted.

Again, we see the cycle of history repeating. By making the Jews an enemy of the people, Adolf Hitler transferred public dissatisfaction and the social pressure that went with it, to one specific group. The unity of Germany was reached at the cost of the blood of the Jewish people. The Myanmar government is doing the very same thing. Apart from Germany, the doings of Myanmar officials are also reminiscent of the 2009 Ürümqi riots in China, which centered around the religious and racial differences between Muslim Uighurs and Han Chinese.

It, therefore, makes sense that China will respond in favor of the Myanmar government, especially given the similar political standing the two countries hold. Internationally speaking, few countries in the western world are satisfied with China's policies with the Uyghurs, even today. It would also make a lot of sense to stand behind a neighboring friend who's caught up in the same religious disputes. Because if Myanmar was ever successfully intervened, China can easily be the next.

If we look at the works that China has done in the last ten years, it is clear that China aggressively tries to assimilate the Uyghurs into Chinese society, including building railroads at the national debt, relocating Han Chinese in Xinjiang, and opening up reeducation camps for the Uyghurs. The effectiveness of these measures remains to be seen, but one thing is certain, the Chinese government chooses governmental control over the uncertainty of a diverse, open nation.

That said, China will not blindly side with the Myanmar regime. Should the time come when their actions go so far that they cross the line—which seems inevitable—China will not sit idly by? This is mainly because China needs to uphold its reputation as a global peacekeeper, which demands China not step aside in the event of a major human right violation.

However, the degree of China's participation is going to be largely bound by its principle of nonintervention—choosing not to infringe on the sovereignty of other nations. It can be anticipated that China will share experiences on religious and racial assimilation with the Myanmar government while protesting a significant intervention in the nation's domestic affairs.

# Sample Articles

*From Harvard National Model UN 2019* (FOX NEWS)

## Enforcement vs. Sovereignty, But Where Is Democracy?

February 16, 2019

Tension seems to rise within the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM) regarding whether stronger enforcement of human rights articles could pose threats to national sovereignty.

The topic of the committee, rights of gender and sexuality, is inherently controversial itself. In a nation that embraces democracy and individual freedom as much as the United States, same-sex marriage is only recognized in 2015. However, the very fact that people remain divided on the issue, which is based on their faith and ideology, even after the legislation, verifies that enactment of laws does not necessarily make sure everyone is on the same page.

Take Poland for example, the delegate of Poland has pledged for the delegates to consider if the implementation of human rights laws regarding gender and sexuality will violate the rights of religious individuals for keeping their own faith, a view shared by Ethiopia.

While the delegate of Georgia stated that different religions offer different interpretations of gender and sexuality, the rights of people of faith remain threatened. Because of the diverse religious interpretations, we have and the respect for individual freedom that we value, America becomes a place we see some churches raise rainbow flags and but also others offer spiritual cleansing for same-sex desires, where everybody can get something they want.

It is also true that different nations breed different democracies, which is deep-rooted in the diverse national ideologies they hold. The enforcement of human rights articles will override the will of the diverse peoples in a diverse world.

Something quite contradictory is the proposal of Japan, in which the delegate attempts to enforce the rights of sexual minorities universally, a major step-back from one of the core principles of respecting the diversity that the United Nations thrive for. What we could think about is, perhaps, the proposal of Canada, one that sets a minimum standard that will ensure the rights of the minorities but also makes sure that protection doesn't intervene with the majority.

As the delegate of India said, the enforcement of human rights articles is not the opposition of national sovereignty, but rather, it is something that can coexist. A similar stand is also taken by the delegate of the Netherlands, who wanted to strike a balance between the two.

It remains to see how will the delegates from SOCHUM resolve this dispute in the following sessions, but what concerns people the most is whether democracy or the voice of the people is going to be heard

# Sample Articles

## Opinion: The Hypocrisy of"Self-Determination"

Le Figaro, FEBRUARY 15, 2019

As the United Nations Security Council convenes to address the issue of the national status of Kurdish people at the height of profound regional changes, one notices two distinct arguments taking shape. The first, articulated by states such as the United Kingdom, is of aggressive international support for a new Kurdish state, particularly in Syria, "liberating" them from what they portray as a strangling "intersectional oppression" from the Syrian government and ethnic sub-state communities such as the Syrian Alawites. The second, from as incongruous bedfellows as the United States and the Russian Federation, believes in supporting the "national self-determination" of the Syrian state, and strongly opposes armed intervention. The U.S. even went so far as to suggest to a Le Figaro reporter that "larger nations should not be meddling in the affairs of smaller states" – a dramatic turn from its Iraq War-era policy of the past decade and one indicative of declining American power. This second group favors civil rights and development initiatives for the Kurds and frameworks for proportional representation and an international Kurdish assembly.

Two separate policy arguments to be sure – however, looking beyond measures of military intervention versus rural education programs, one notices that they are not so different as one might think. In reality, they are both about national self-determination, the rub being whose national self-determination the international community should prioritize, Syria's (and the three other sovereign states with Kurdish populations) or Kurdistan's. The Kurds, for sure, believe themselves to be a nation. They have a shared language, flag, culture, and history that archaeologists have been able to trace back to the third millennium, B.C.E. They have vast potential for economic clout powered by the reserves of oil falling in their occupied territory, and they have begun constructing a military alliance of their international militias. Save for the fact that their political union currently has no borders, they would appear to be as much of a nation as France or Spain.

Syria, by contrast, has existed under its current borders since the end of World War I, when the victorious Entente powers divided the Ottoman Empire's former territory into administrative units. Its population comprises, Arabs, Circassians, and Arameans, in addition to the Kurdish minority in the north. It suffers from great internal disunity on account of ethnic differences and has been wracked by civil war. The American Belfer Center think tank classifies it as a failed state.

Why prioritize a floundering polity over one that is unified and hungry? The reason is that the former has borders. If Kurdistan were to come into existence out of Syrian, Iraqi, Turkish, and Iranian territory, who is to say that nation-states should not be cleaved out of the lands of other existing sovereign countries? It is in the interests of sovereign states to support the concept of the national borders status quo for the sake of their borders' own inviolability, regardless of how shaky their own claims to cohesive nationhood might be, lest they be forced apart. Rather than being a rallying cry for oppressed minorities, "national self-determination" has become a byline for the status quo. Which, of course, we should not expect the U.N. Security Council to dare touch

*From Harvard National Model UN 2019*

# Sample Articles

*From Harvard National Model UN 2019*

## Editorial: This is it?

DAILY SABAH, FEBRUARY 15, 2019

In the third session of the DISEC meetings on the Kurdish state, delegates started to present their working papers to the committee followed by an intense period of question and answer sessions from other delegates. In total, there are up to eight working papers on the floor each addressing the Kurdish question in their own unique way. Some mention education as an option, while other papers call for the establishment of a fully defined autonomous government and centralized region for the Kurds.

Specifically, one of the directives, known as "Kurds Just Wanna have Fun(damental Rights)", tackles many facets of the Kurdish problem; however, they are many problems that this document does not properly solve. One clause in this paper calls for the governments of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Turkey to "commit to administrative divisions" of Greater Kurdistan into three zones. These zones are to be divided by zone A, B, and C. The subclause about Zone B calls for shared power of these Kurdish regions with their respective States that control the land currently. The Kurdish get a security apparatus that can be vetted by them and the UNSC and their respective State cannot attack these forces at any cost. This seems to be hypocritical in the sense that the PKK has been known to kill innocents in Turkey and yet the Turkish government is criticized by the world for taking action against violent acts.

To let the Kurds militarize without opposition is unfair and unjust on the part of the international community. The United States has a history of taking unfair military actions on other countries and the nations of the world have always kept quiet and pretended what they do is right even if it leads to a destabilized nation. If a country such as Turkey cannot have the same chance to defend their people and to let another group arm up, this only goes to illustrate hypocrisy at its finest. Additionally, this paper seeks to "address the geopolitical rivalries in the region [the Kurdish sectors], in particular, intelligence and spying." The authors of this paper claimed that this resolution is "comprehensive", yet it fails to deliver on that since this clause does not mention anything about achieving this goal. There are no specifics on how they will go about addressing the espionage issue and this vagueness is worrying for such a complex issue as this.

To support a paper such as this would be unwise since claims such as the previous one mentioned show just how incomplete their solutions are. There are alternative solutions that solve this issue, while also giving other nations affected by this equal and just opportunity to give their input into the matter without other countries shoving ideas into their mouths.

# Sample Articles

## A Democracy and A Dictatorship: What is the US doing with North Korea

February 6, 2025, The Washington Post

As the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) began to share draft resolutions, an odd pairing took the stage. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, or DPRK, (more commonly known as North Korea) sponsored a resolution alongside none other than The United States of America.

It's no secret that North Korea and the US have long had a tenuous relationship. In fact, the United States does not even have diplomatic relations with North Korea, according to the US Department Of State. When it comes to national identities, policies, and priorities, there is little to no overlap.

The fact that the US and North Korea chose to work together is even more surprising when DISEC's topic is considered: Strengthening International Measures to Prevent and to Respond to Disease Warfare and Bioterrorism. The US has repeatedly accused North Korea of developing biological weapons against the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), most recently in a 2019 compliance report by the US State Department. Once again, it begs the question: what was the US doing sponsoring a resolution with North Korea?

The US is party to the BWC, as is North Korea. This means that both nations have agreed to never "develop, produce, stockpile, or otherwise acquire or retain biological agents or toxins…that have no justification for peaceful use" (US Department of State). Yet the resolution the delegates presented did not discourage the use or development of biological weapons. Instead, it encouraged it. The resolution banks on the idea that the fear of biological weapons is enough to stop nations from using them. The delegation of the United States commented to the Post that since biological weapons are part of our reality, nations should be sure "everyone has a gun to defend themselves," a far cry from the United State's commitment to the BWC. Second Amendment aside, this does not seem like a well-regulated militia.

Neither delegation commented on the unlikely collaboration to the Post. While openly defying a treaty is somewhat expected of North Korea, it was jarring to see that the DPRK's "right-hand man" was our very own Uncle Sam.

*important to note that after this editorial's publication, the Post was informed by an unnamed delegate that the resolution in question did in fact fail. Perhaps the other members of DISEC found the pairing of sponsors concerning as well*

# Sample Articles

## A Sign Of The Times: "Division" in DISEC

February 6, 2025, The Washington Post

Within the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC), there is little argument. The majority of the delegates are in agreement on how to handle the issue at hand; Strengthening International Measures to Prevent and Respond to Disease Warfare and Bioterrorism. Most agree that an international task force, overseen by the UN, with localized branches, is needed for oversight of biological development. Further, many agree that a database that compiles relevant information could be very helpful. However, there are five separate blocs and resolutions in DISEC.

There is one radical outlier of the five resolutions presented (see "A Democracy and a Dictatorship"), but the other four are eerily similar. When pressed, delegates from each bloc admitted similarity to the Post. The delegates may acknowledge the similarity in solutions, but there has been no one to bridge the gaps between blocs. When asked, the delegation of Poland reasoned that it is simply because "Every country and group wants to be sure that their specific wishes are met."

What if it is more than that?

It's no secret that politics are almost hopelessly polarized. In the US, the chasm between left and right seems to be growing every day. Each side stubbornly refuses to give in to the other. Has this polarization leached into the world of international diplomacy? If DISEC is an example, it seems so. The delegates know that they agree on more than they disagree. Yet they will not merge blocs, even if it means a better chance at passing a resolution. Are egos at play? Are legacies on the line? Are states just stubborn? It remains to be seen if a delegation will brave the divide, that perhaps isn't that wide.



## APPENDIX & SOURCES

"Harvard Model United Nations." *Harvard Model* UN, www.harvardmun.org/.

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