



# SciMUNC XVII

*SPECIAL POLITICAL & DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE*

# Territorial Disputes

**BACKGROUND GUIDE**

*SPECIAL POLITICAL & DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE*

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## Letter from the Dais

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Dear Delegates,

My name is Marco Giordano and I am so excited for this conference as it is my first time chairing! This is a committee that we have worked hard on, and we hope that you guys can get as much out of this committee as we did. My interests lie in soccer, traveling, and scuba diving, although I do all of these things less than I would like to. This committee focuses on a very broad topic, so I hope that gives you guys a lot of liberty with what to do and which direction to steer the committee in. I hope that we can all have a lot of fun with this conference and if you have any questions about this committee, you can contact me at [marcog68@nycstudents.net](mailto:marcog68@nycstudents.net).

Hello Delegates! My name is Angela Tao. This is also my first time chairing and I am looking forward to being your vice chair! I have been on the MUN team since my sophomore year. Upon joining this team, I have gained more confidence in public speaking and found love in history and research. Outside of MUN, I wrestle for my school's girl's varsity wrestling team, I play the piano, and I am a part of my school's research program. This committee is about decolonization and sovereignty and consists of many different topics that fall under that umbrella. I hope you guys gain valuable experience from this committee and most of all I hope that we can all have fun! If you have any questions or concerns about this committee you can contact me at [angelat55@nycstudents.net](mailto:angelat55@nycstudents.net). I look forward to seeing you all!

Best,

Marco Giordano and Angela Tao

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## Committee Description

### *Special Political and Decolonization Committee*

SPECPOL (Special Political & Decolonization Committee) is one of the broadest committees in the United Nations, covering topics ranging from radiation to refugee crises. For the purpose of this committee, the focus of the committee will be on discussing how the world can come to a peaceful solution regarding sovereignty and decolonization of states and nations across the world.

SPECPOL was the 4th of the main UN general assemblies that began in 1993. This assembly started as a resolution to help defeat decolonization around the world. It set out broad guidelines regarding next steps for the UN, but it emphasized the consensus among countries to maintain and advance global peace.

The most relevant committees to this conference of SPECPOL are Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C34) and Special Committee on Decolonization (C24). The peacekeeping

operation committee worked on a number of different topics, like sexual exploitation and abuse as well as the allocation of the budget of UN Peacekeeping. C24 works specifically on improving and developing countries that have suffered from a mishandling of colonization. The C4 committee also covers land disputes that are deeply rooted into the issues of decolonization.

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## Background Information

SPECPOL started solely to facilitate decolonization. Decolonization really began at the end of World War II, after a push for a free world where oppression was dismantled. This was facilitated by the exposure of the atrocities in the Congo which pioneered the independence movement.

In the 15 years after World War II, 36 new countries were decolonized. What this meant for countries varied drastically. Egypt, for one, received independence gradually but peacefully with Britain backing out. On the other hand, there were many cases in Western Africa where France threatened to sanction countries that didn't comply with France's conditions of independence, which ultimately led to the factor colonization. Other colonies, such as Hong Kong, were simply restituted back with no further colonizer influence.

These issues carried on into the present as well, with many Caribbean, African, and Asian countries still struggling to gain human and economic development.

SPECPOL has expanded into working on repairing the damage the mishandling of decolonization brought to colonized

countries. This committee will zero in on this specific issue in order to make the committee more guided.

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## Main Committee Topic

The main committee will be focusing on how to combat the effects of territorial disputes and how to uphold sovereignty in a number of global issues. These are global issues that are still major issues today and the main objective of the committee is to find a peaceful conclusion to these issues. The following are the issues that will be highlighted for this committee in SCIMUNC:

### *Libyan Civil War*

The first issue that will be discussed in committee will be the Libyan Civil war. Before the civil war started, Libya was run by a socialist dictator, Ghaddafi. Although Ghaddafi did not allow for a democracy, he was able to establish Libya as a prosperous country where the Libyan economy grew. When Ghaddafi was killed in 2011, the country descended into a civil war, where fights occurred between multiple parties regarding the next Libyan government body. Libya is currently safer due to a ceasefire between the most prominent political groups (called the Libyan national Army and the Government of National Accord ) signed in 2020, but the effects of the civil war and the

failure of the formation of a structured government are still present. Libya is currently an incredibly dangerous country, with one of the highest rates of kidnappings and crime in the world. In addition, there is a lack of infrastructure from floods that have decimated urban areas.

Libya was also a former Italian colony, and historically, former colonizing countries have paid reparations to their colonized counterparts. But, Italy has given Libya very little aid and after abandoning the colony has not done much to improve the quality of life in Libya. Something this committee may have to consider is how Italy's duties in decolonizing Libya may still not be over.

### *South Sudanese Civil War*

The second issue this committee will cover will be the repercussions of the Sudan - South Sudan conflict. The South Sudanese civil war ended in 2005, with South Sudan gaining full independence in 2006. The conflict began in 1983, making it one of the longest civil wars ever. The war started because the Arab Muslim majority of Sudan began oppressing the Christian majority

south, who were not able to enjoy the same rights as the Sudanese majority.

However, after independence, South Sudan broke into civil war again, this time between two entities: the Government of South Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation. The conflict broke out as different ethnic populations desired governmental control and caused more violence in South Sudan. Some of the consequences of the violence were war crimes and ethnic cleansing in urban areas of South Sudan, as well as famines affecting millions of people.

South Sudan was a British colony, and similarly to Libya and Italy, something to consider is how much Britain indirectly caused the issues in South Sudan by not decolonizing South Sudan by giving them a chance of independence. Another factor to consider is what ownership should Sudan take as prompting the civil war and secession. The South Sudan civil war also has different ethnicities in South Sudan fighting over power, and something important that should also be considered in finding peace in South Sudan is finding a role in the government for all ethnicities.

### ***The Sudan-Egypt Border Dispute***

The third issue committee will cover will be the consequences of poor decolonization showcased in the Sudan Egypt border dispute. The border dispute concerns the Halaib Triangle, a portion of land containing ethnic Nubians, meaning the people in the Halaib triangle do not consider themselves as ethnically belonging to either country.

Egypt argues in favor of the 22nd parallel border, drawn by Britain while Egypt was their colony. This border granted Egypt access to the Halaib triangle. On the other hand, Sudan believes that the 1902 administrative line border should be respected, which would grant the triangle to Sudan. Both agreements were facilitated by the United Kingdom, and it was Britain's actions that led to promising two colonies the same land.

The triangle is also important to both countries as it would grant them more of the Red Sea coast and more oil-rich land, which both countries would be able to profit off.

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Sudan and Egypt held joint control over the area until 1992 when Egypt stopped Sudanian control in the region due to Sudan accepting foreign oil companies to use Halaibi oil. Egypt has kept de facto control over the region ever since, but tensions have escalated and Sudan is prioritizing regaining control over the triangle.

### ***The Kosovo-Serbia Territorial Dispute***

The fourth issue in committee is the Kosovo-Serbia dispute which stems from the ethnic and political tensions between Kosovo, a mostly Albanian territory that was a part of Serbia before it gained independence, and Serbia. Many Serbs consider this portion of land to be the birthplace of their nation because of the battle between Serb nationalists and Ottoman Turks in 1389 even though currently 92% of the population are Albanians. Although Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008, the government of Serbia refuses to recognize Kosovo as a state even though Serbia has no control over it.

The tension between Kosovo and Serbia has been around for centuries. Serbia

gained control of Kosovo in 1912 after the First Balkan War. Over time many of the neighboring states started gaining independence while Kosovo stayed a part of Serbia. The Kosovo Liberation Army fought Milosevic's Serbian forces for independence which lasted from 1998 through 1999. There was a resolution passed in 1999 by the United Nations Security Council that ended the war and established a NATO peacekeeping force in Kosovo, but Kosovo still wanted full independence. On February 17th, 2008, the Kosovo Assembly voted to declare independence from Serbia. Serbia claimed that the vote for independence was illegal.

Recently, an ethnic Serb gunmen broke into the village of Banjska in the mostly Serb region of North Kosovo, breaking into a Serbian Orthodox monastery and killing one policeman and three gunmen. This was seen as the worst escalation of violence in years, and war may return to Kosovo if more successful negotiations do not occur.

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### ***Corruption and Safety in Mali***

The fifth committee topic is the crisis in Mali. Mali is a country in West Africa that was colonized by France. Since its decolonization, the country has been in steady decline. The French military began to take over the area in about 1880. About ten years later, the French occupied the land. A French civilian governor was appointed in 1893, stating a French government in the colony. There was a lot of resistance towards French control which eventually died down in 1989. France overthrew domestic leaders and appointed chiefs to power without the consent of the Mali people.

In January of 1959, Soudan (the French name for Mali) united with Senegal, another country in West Africa, and formed the Mali Federation. They became fully independent in June of 1960. The Federation eventually fell apart and in August of 1960, with Senegal seceding. In September of 1960, Soudan called itself the Republic of Mali and withdrew from French rule.

In early 1991, many anti-government riots broke out and many government workers and others supported it. After 4 days of rioting, military officers arrested the

President of that time and suspended the constitution.

Currently, drug money, corruption and jihadists have dominated most of Mali. The country is also very unsafe for tourists. Jihadists radical rebels now have dominated north of Mali. In addition, over the past five years, the government has been trying to stop the kidnappings of Western tourists and development workers in Mali.

There have also been drugs that have been brought from Latin America to northern Mali and from there are transported to Mediterranean countries or Egypt. Mali's soldiers and officials are also subject to corruption. Resulting in less police presence that can combat these issues.

### ***Venezuela-Guyana Territorial Dispute***

The sixth committee issue is the Venezuela-Guyana border dispute. The border controversy between the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela started as a result of the disagreement over the Arbitral Award of 1899 signed by Guyana about the frontier between British Guiana and Venezuela. The dispute is over whether the

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160,000 square kilometer Essequibo region, currently administered by Guyana, should fall within the borders of Venezuela. In 1966, a border committee was set up with representatives from Guyana, Venezuela and the United Kingdom, but this committee didn't reach any agreement.

In 1970, Venezuela agreed to a 12-year suspension of the dispute, but refused to renew the suspension in 1981. But, because of changes to the government, relations between both countries improved for a time. But in 1999, tensions increased again because Venezuelan troops surrounded the areas around the borders. In 2007, Guyana accused Venezuelan troops of destroying their gold mines located around the borders.

The conflict has escalated since oil was found in Essequibo in 2015. Recently, Venezuela announced that it would hold a public vote on the issue, something that Guyana described as illegal. Guyana has recently asked the International Court of Justice for assistance because it states that Venezuela is sending troops to the frontier.

### ***Possible Solutions***

Many of the issues in this committee are issues regarding territorial disputes. Over the course of history, territorial disputes have been solved in a number of different ways. One is by negotiating a new border that both parties agree to. However, this can lead to consequences, such as people of a certain ethnicity and culture being misplaced into a different country. At the same time, one country, on the basis of historical or moral right, may want the borders to be redrawn in their favor.

### ***Financial solutions:***

One viable solution is to provide monetary incentive. If one country is able to provide monetary relief to another country in a territorial dispute, it would lead to a peaceful solution as well as the ability for people to immigrate out of the disputed territory and into their own respected country. Although this sounds like a good solution, there are potential issues. For example, buying off land may not result in an "ethical" resolution and can contribute to the power of wealthier countries. In addition, funding the displacement of people may appear as helping them immigrate to more

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prosperous locations, however this will inevitably lead to people leaving their historical land, again arriving at an ethical dilemma.

#### Ethnic Borders:

Another realistic solution could be to create enclaves and exclaves via ethnic lines. Many countries, such as India and Bangladesh, have adopted borders that are not contiguous, with parts of Bangladesh surrounded by India and vice versa. This resolution was ideal as people were able to be a part of the country their area's people belonged to. This resolution, however, is a part of few territorial disputes, and sometimes can't be negotiated on as one country would lose more territory that it would gain.

#### Buffer Zones:

In 1955, Cyprus experienced a series of attacks from Turkish separatists wanting Northern Cyprus to be annexed by Turkey. This divided the other side of the island, which was mostly populated by Greeks. This led to a border dispute and violence where a UN border was established in order to divide

the Turkish side of Cyprus from the Greek side. It was able to keep Cyprus as its own country while dividing the 2 groups.

Although this hasn't completely solved the issue, it was able to bring peace to Cyprus with both sides of the island coexisting. The use of a UN buffer zone may be a good option in order to stop violence and separate groups.

#### Ethnic representation:

Another important aspect of this committee is that in sovereignty comes equality and equal representation in countries' governments. In many multi-ethnic and multiracial countries like South Africa freedom of expression of all citizens came after years of apartheid. One solution is adopting a model where some branches of government are divided by population (meaning larger ethnicities have more representation) and other branches have equal representation for all ethnicities regardless of population. This would allow for people in diverse countries to coexist as long as the branches can work together to allow multiple branches to be able to work together.

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***Questions to Consider***

1. Historically, has your delegation colonized or been colonized?
  2. What has your delegation done in the past to uphold sovereignty and decolonization?
  3. What pre-existing alliances has your delegation formed with other delegations?
  4. What economic power does your delegation hold?
  5. How much military power does your country have?
  6. Geographically, how close is your delegation to these conflicts? How impactful are these conflicts on your delegation?
  7. How do the conflicts in the committee compare to each other? Are the conflicts equally severe and impactful?
  8. What is your delegation's form of government? What political values does your delegation uphold?
  9. What does your delegation consider progress in this committee?
  10. What does your delegation consider to be a fair compromise? What is your delegation willing to sacrifice versus deeming necessary to keep?
  11. To what extent are the conflicts in this committee interconnected and how can that lead to better resolutions?
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**Bloc Positions***Algeria**Antigua and Barbuda**Argentina**Armenia**Azerbaijan**Brazil**Canada**Cuba**France**Germany**Ghana**Guyana**Hungary**Iran**Italy**India**Indonesia**Kosovo**Mexico**Morocco**Pakistan**Papua New Guinea**Russia**Saudi Arabia**Serbia**South Africa**South Korea**South Sudan**Sudan**Timor-Leste**Tunisia**United Kingdom**United States of America**Venezuela*

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