

Zemelyte, Beatrice. "Russia-Ukraine War: 'Not All Refugees Are Treated the Same.'" *Aljazeera.com*, Al Jazeera, 8 July 2022, [www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/7/8/russia-ukraine-amnesty-interview](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/7/8/russia-ukraine-amnesty-interview). Accessed 2 Oct. 2022.

## TOPIC 2: THE ISSUE OF SUSTAINABLE SECURITY FOR INDIGENOUS, MINORITY, AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS.

### Introduction

The holistic topic of sustainable security is one which concerns the whole world, every living organism and landscape; from the environment to social inequalities, there are many threats to be addressed. These threats, however, have one common target disproportionately affected compared to other populations- indigenous, minority and other vulnerable populations. Although their environmental footprint is small, sometimes more beneficial than negative, these vulnerable groups face the biggest obstacles in dealing with the effects of climate change.

### Key Terms

#### **Sustainable Security:**

A redefined concept of national security which follows a non-traditional approach to addressing world issues. More specifically, sustainable security focuses on addressing human security concerns such as economic growth, social inclusion, human rights and environmental protection, as opposed to traditional threats, which focus on more militaristic issues.

#### **Indigenous Peoples:**

Distinct social and cultural groups with shared ancestral links to the lands and natural resources where they reside. Their identities, traditions, livelihoods, and bodily and spiritual well-being are intricately linked to the land and natural resources on which they depend.

**Minority:**

A marginalised group of people who do not share the ethnicity of the dominant group in an ethnocentric society, this can include BIPOC (black, indigenous, people of colour) and any other mixed ethnic minorities.

**Developing Countries:**

The concept of a ‘developing’ nation has multiple definitions, but when referred to in this report, a developing country refers to a country with a less-developed industrial base and a lower Human Development Index when compared to other nations.

**Developed Countries:**

A nation with a higher standard of living, a more tertiary and quaternary sector focused economy, and technologically advanced infrastructure relative to less industrialised countries.

**Legislative:**

A set of laws passed by the Parliament; also refers to the act of making a new law. A legislative gap refers to when parties fail to provide provisions for a particular matter.

**Coexistence:**

The idea in which humans have to harmoniously exist with nature and be mindful of preserving the ecological balance and diversity of other species. This includes mitigating or offsetting any environmental footprints and the restoration of deteriorated biomes.

**Background Information**

While Indigenous Peoples own, inhabit, or utilise just one-fourth of the world's surface area, they are responsible for protecting around eighty percent of the planet's surviving biodiversity. They possess crucial ancestral information and skills about adaptation and mitigation often used by governments in reducing climate and disaster risks. This makes them invaluable in finding sustainable ways of coexisting with nature which was seen as a hindrance to modern development not many decades ago. Although ‘us versus nature’ attitudes have lessened, the environmental impact remains in motion.

Due to an exponential increase in global demand following the Industrial Revolution, poor land tenure and the subsequent deterioration of ecosystems, many of these populations are on the verge of extinction.

Land tenure insecurity is a primary cause of conflict, environmental damage, and sluggish economic and social growth. Though most of the land occupied by Indigenous Peoples is under customary ownership, many governing systems refuse to address this, recognising only a fraction of this land as belonging to these people. This endangers cultural survival and essential knowledge systems, with losses in these areas increasing the risks of population fragility and biodiversity loss.

Furthermore, in light of growing global demand, the exploitation of resources has exacerbated the deterioration of ecosystems. As a result, there has been an increase in displacement, loss of land, water, and means of subsistence, as well as an increase in militarisation, violence, and repression to capture Indigenous Peoples' resources. These infractions are committed without regard for the negative effects on the environment, territory, and people.

While majorities may have experienced sustainable progression, many minority and indigenous communities have fallen further behind in regard to sustainable development outcomes, consequently being forced into a situation of migration to other regions or eviction from their homeland.

## **Key Issues**

### **Balancing development and sustainability**

Vulnerable developing countries are often criticised for 'destroying' the small bits of nature the world has left in favour of modern development with little to no green and blue spaces or means of environmental offsetting; however, the question of whether it is fair to expect these countries to sacrifice economic development in the name of 'eco-friendliness', when other developed countries have already gone through the exact same process before climate change was even researched, comes into play.

## **Dispersion of insecurity**

Global warming is one of the greatest challenges humanity faces today. However, its consequences are disproportionately divided, particularly impacting disadvantaged and socially marginalised groups. This is attributed to many factors, including their lack of financial means to negate the effects of climate change while being more exposed to natural disasters and health risks.

Due to their dependency on an intimate relationship with the environment and its resources, Indigenous Peoples are among the first to experience the direct effects of global warming on the ecosystems or landscapes they inhabit. Further mistreatment of the Indigenous Peoples' traditions, culture and land would diminish both environmental and social development within various health systems.

## **Exclusion of indigenous stakeholders in decision making**

Though Indigenous Peoples make up 5% of the global population, over 33% live in a state of extreme rural poverty, with a weak representation system in legislative acts and a lack of rights acting as key contributors. The lack of representation for Indigenous Peoples has played a part in limiting their ability to take a more active role in society. Legislative gaps, particularly those pertaining to encroachment by extractive industries and infrastructure megaprojects, have posed significant risks to these peoples as they continue to lose land, thereby upsetting communal structures and customs.

Indigenous Peoples frequently express concerns regarding systemic oppression and overt racism on the part of the State and its officials. Negligence in addressing these concerns has left these minorities in a vulnerable position, dealing with heightened environmental degradation, poverty levels, inadequate access to education and health care, and greater human rights violations.

## **Timeline**

November 8th - December 8th, 1965: *The Race Relations Act of 1965* was the first law to address racial discrimination in the United Kingdom, prohibiting discrimination based on "colour, race, or ethnic or national origins" in public areas of the United Kingdom.

**November 11th, 1975:** *The James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement of 1975* addressed the economic development and property concerns of indigenous populations in northern Quebec. It established a variety of cultural, social, and governmental organisations for Indigenous Peoples who are members of the participating communities. This report also laid the foundations for future treaties for the Indigenous Peoples, with a key central focus on equality and respect towards their lands.

**July 25th, 1984:** *The Inuvialuit Final Agreement of 1984* refers to a policy in which Inuvialuit Peoples agreed to relinquish exclusive usage of their ancestral territory in return for additional rights granted by the Canadian government. The rights consisted of land and harvesting rights, wildlife management, and monetary compensation.

**April 26th, 1986:** *The Chornobyl disaster* (more commonly known as Chernobyl which is the Russian spelling whilst Chornobyl is more transliterate and preferred since 1991 when Ukrainian became the only official language in Ukraine) was a nuclear accident that happened at the Chornobyl Nuclear Power Plant, near the city of Prypiat (another Ukrainian transliteration) in northern Ukraine. The aftermath of the event left thousands displaced, with the city being completely uninhabitable whilst also causing long-term damage towards the surrounding environment that can still be felt until this day.

**December 18th, 1992:** *The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious, and Linguistic Minorities*, enacted by the United Nations General Assembly, was made with the intent of protecting and advancing minority rights. This was made following concerns that migrants were losing their right to enjoy their own culture, religion and language due to forced cultural assimilation.

**December 16th, 1994:** *The Basic Environment Strategy*, adopted by the Japanese Government, is a national plan for long-term environmental protection. The primary objective of this plan was to protect the environment, with a focus on constructing a society that is economically sustainable without negatively impacting the environment, and

positively contributing to the conservation of the global environment. Additionally, they sought to address the mass production, mass consumption, and mass disposal of nature in order to solve newly emerging environmental problems such as industrial, urban and domestic-type pollution.

**December 11th, 1997:** The Kyoto Protocol of 1997 was an international treaty obligating state parties to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A central motivator within this protocol was to reduce global temperatures in order to ensure that populations living close to/relying on the shoreline remain secure.

**September 13th, 2007:** The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, enacted by the United Nations General, was made with the intent of protecting and advancing indigenous rights. The act sets a global framework for the basic standards of Indigenous Peoples, elaborating on existing human rights norms and fundamental freedoms.

**March 11th, 2011:** Fukushima was a nuclear disaster that occurred in 2011 at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant in Fukushima, Japan. Not only did this event trigger the displacement of over 154,000, it also had major environmental impacts as well, with approximately 30 gigabecquerels of radioactive waste flowing into its water-streams over 2 years. The environmental damage of this nuclear disaster has left the place practically inhabitable leaving the lives of thousands in danger as they are unable to return home whilst serving to further increase levels of water pollution.

**May 2014th - Present:** The Chinese Ethnic Cleanse in Xinjiang, often known as the Uyghurs Genocide, refers to an extensive period starting from 2014 in which Uyghurs and other minorities faced a level of systematic oppression, culminating in the illegal imprisonment of an estimated one million Turkic Muslims in internment camps. These actions have been described as the forced assimilation of Xinjiang and are considered major human rights violations.

**May 1st, 2015:** The Rohingya Refugee Crisis refers to a period in 2015 where, due to sectarian violence, tens of thousands of Rohingya people were forcibly evacuated from their communities and IDP camps in Rakhine State, Myanmar. This was one of the clearest examples of a Minority Human Rights violation within modern times, causing thousands to

be forcibly displaced from their homes whilst many more were displaced within their own country, with over 1,100,000 people being exposed to systemic violence and persecution in Myanmar based on their religion.

**March 2015:** The European Migrant Crisis, often known globally as the Syrian refugee crisis, refers to a period in 2015 when 1,3 million people sought asylum in Europe. During this period, many Syrians, alongside several other nationals like Afghans and Nigerians, sought refuge in Europe, predominantly Germany and Scandinavia. These people migrated to Europe, hoping for a more stable and livable environment. However, even though 7 years have passed, most of these people remain stuck in camps and have failed to assimilate themselves into their host countries. It is estimated that only 39% have been granted asylum. Furthermore, the Migrant Crisis has received extremely little media coverage, making both public and authorised support extremely difficult.

**September 30th, 2015:** A report with 94 calls to action was made by the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2015 to improve the lives of Indigenous Canadians and address the long history of discrimination, exploitation, environmental consequences and abuse they have suffered. This day is now marked as the *National Day for Truth and Reconciliation*.

**November 4th, 2016:** *The Paris Agreement* is an international treaty aimed at helping countries better adapt to climate change effects, and financial difficulties – this treaty was said to be detrimental in providing vulnerable countries with the necessary resources to combat the changing world. As of today, the Paris Agreement has been successfully used in climate litigation forcing countries and oil companies to strengthen climate action.

**October 9th, 2016 - Present:** *The Rohingya Genocide* refers to a period of prolonged persecution and murder of the Muslim Rohingya people by the Burmese military, starting in 2016 up until this moment. During this time, over one million Rohingya were forced to flee to neighbouring countries due to the conflict whilst the remainder were exposed to widespread abuses of human rights, including ethnocide, rape, imprisonment and capital punishment.

**November 2016 - May 2018:** *The Kinder Morgan Pipeline Land Violation* refers to when the Canadian government approved a pipeline that had difficulties for Indigenous Peoples and the environment. Though the Kinder Morgan Project promised to satisfy indigenous and environmental concerns, many indigenous leaders stated that they were not consulted for the best strategies to minimise damage towards the environment within the area. As a result, gas leaks from the pipelines caused water pollution within the area to rise dramatically, harming marine life and the ecosystem for Indigenous Peoples.

**March 1st, 2018:** *The Green Climate Fund's Indigenous Peoples Policy* describes a strategy for incorporating the situations of Indigenous Peoples into climate change mitigation and adaptation decision-making for all countries. The policy also aims to recognise Indigenous Peoples' decision-making in society with regards to climate action.

**2019:** The United Nations declares 2019 as the *International Year of Indigenous Languages*, a year focused on prioritising the efforts to raise awareness for indigenous rights. During this year, the UN had planned to place multiple sanctions in place that serve not only for the benefit of the people who speak these languages but also so that others may recognise the significant contribution they make to the world's cultural diversity.

### **Possible Challenges & Solutions**

The aftermath of Western Colonialism on indigenous lands, followed by an exacerbated population of minorities lacking proper human rights, has resulted in multiple subaltern populations. Improper care for these populations and their power has left the world in a state of imbalance between humans and their coexistence with nature. To address this, institutional and legislative changes, specifically ones regarding the acknowledgement of indigenous/minority stakeholders, can be made.

Providing an opportunity for Indigenous peoples, as well as other vulnerable minority populations, in discussions of land use and human rights serves to build a connected understanding between minority and majority, a key central factor in sustaining social development.



Funding should be made regarding projects ensuring the protection of land rights. This may serve an important role in the environmental reformation of previously destroyed land, with communities gaining the proper funding and materials needed to manage their lands sustainably, reducing dispersions of insecurity.

Further developing policies in line with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples may increase chances of protection towards the misappropriation of traditional indigenous knowledge whilst also providing them with recognition as equal stakeholders and the legitimate holders of their knowledge; acknowledgement of their rights, and thus their roles in society, will play an important role in the conservation of both society and the environment.

Another consideration could also be plausible ideological changes within current/future education systems. Further acknowledgement of the history and lost rights of these populations may contribute to raising public awareness and social awareness. This will allow current and future generations to produce a better system against discrimination and mismanaged rights, as well as place more awareness and respect towards the languages, traditions and lifestyles of these populations.

### **Recommendations for Research**

The chairs strongly recommend that delegates look deeper into each historical point (within the 20th and 21st centuries) in which a key issue within sustainable security was endangered. Doing thorough research on each key issue to gain general as well as nation-specific contextual knowledge will help delegates derive adequate resolutions.

Delegates should also look at international laws regarding the rights of vulnerable populations, more specifically their social, economic, and social rights, to have a clearer understanding of the rights these populations were deprived of. To further this, delegates should look into how similar events have been addressed and resolved by past treaties and acts. Lastly, the chairs highly recommend looking at future projections of current projects working to address the key issues and generally staying informed on scientific backings behind projects and solutions.

## Bibliography

Albers, Gretchen. "Treaties with Indigenous Peoples in Canada." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, Historica Canada, 6 June 2011, [www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-treaties](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-treaties). Accessed 1 Oct. 2022.

"The Basic Environment Plan." *Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan*, [www.env.go.jp/en/policy/plan/intro.html](http://www.env.go.jp/en/policy/plan/intro.html). Accessed 29 Sept. 2022.

"Challenges and Opportunities for Indigenous Peoples' Sustainability." *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, DESA*, 23 Apr. 2021, [www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/2021/04/indigenous-peoples-sustainability/](http://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/2021/04/indigenous-peoples-sustainability/). Accessed 30 Sept. 2022.

"Chernobyl Accident 1986." *World Nuclear Association*, Apr. 2022, [www.world-nuclear.org/information-library/safety-and-security/safety-of-plants/chernobyl-accident.aspx](http://www.world-nuclear.org/information-library/safety-and-security/safety-of-plants/chernobyl-accident.aspx). Accessed 1 Oct. 2022.

"Environment." *UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Organizations*, [www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/mandated-areas1/environment.html](http://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/mandated-areas1/environment.html). Accessed 1 Oct. 2022.

"Environmental Policy." *Ministry of Environment, Government of Japan*, [www.env.go.jp/en/policy/plan/intro.html](http://www.env.go.jp/en/policy/plan/intro.html). Accessed 5 Oct. 2022.

"Environmental Rule of Law." *UN Environment Programme, International Organizations*, [www.unep.org/explore-topics/environmental-rights-and-governance/what-we-do/promoting-environmental-rule-law](http://www.unep.org/explore-topics/environmental-rights-and-governance/what-we-do/promoting-environmental-rule-law). Accessed 1 Oct. 2022.

"Fukushima Daiichi Accident." *World Nuclear Association*, May 2022, [www.world-nuclear.org/information-library/safety-and-security/safety-of-plants/fukushima-daiichi-accident.aspx](http://www.world-nuclear.org/information-library/safety-and-security/safety-of-plants/fukushima-daiichi-accident.aspx). Accessed 1 Oct. 2022.

Georgieva, Kristalina. "Poor And Vulnerable Countries Need Support To Adapt To Climate Change." *IMF Blog*, 23 Mar. 2022, [www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/03/23/blog032322-poor-and-vulnerable-countris-need-support-to-adapt-to-climate-change](http://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/03/23/blog032322-poor-and-vulnerable-countris-need-support-to-adapt-to-climate-change). Accessed 1 Oct. 2022.

"Indigenous Peoples Central to Climate Action." *United Nations Climate Change*, UNFCCC, 9 Aug. 2016, [www.unfccc.int/news/indigenous-peoples-central-to-climate-action](http://www.unfccc.int/news/indigenous-peoples-central-to-climate-action). Accessed 26 Sept. 2022.

"Indigenous Peoples Policy." *GreenClimateFund*, 1 Mar. 2018, [www.greenclimate.fund/document/indigenous-peoples-policy](http://www.greenclimate.fund/document/indigenous-peoples-policy). Accessed 1 Oct. 2022.

"Inuvialuit Final Agreement." *Inuvialuit Regional Corporation (IRC)*, 14 Nov. 2021, [www.irc.inuvialuit.com/about-irc/inuvialuit-final-agreement](http://www.irc.inuvialuit.com/about-irc/inuvialuit-final-agreement). Accessed 1 Oct. 2022.

McNeill, Zane Z. "Humans Destroying Ecosystems: How to Measure Our Impact on the Environment." *Sentient Media*, 7 Sept. 2022, [www.sentientmedia.org/humans-destroying-ecosystems/](http://www.sentientmedia.org/humans-destroying-ecosystems/). Accessed 1 Oct. 2022.

"Minorities." *United Nations Fight Racism*, United Nations, [www.un.org/en/fight-racism/vulnerable-groups/minorities](http://www.un.org/en/fight-racism/vulnerable-groups/minorities). Accessed 1 Oct. 2022.

"The Paris Agreement." *United Nations Climate Change*, United Nations, [www.unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement](http://www.unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement). Accessed 1 Oct. 2022.

"The Refugee and Migrant Crisis." *UNICEF*, UN General Assembly, [www.unicef.org/serbia/en/refugee-and-migrant-crisis](http://www.unicef.org/serbia/en/refugee-and-migrant-crisis). Accessed 1 Oct. 2022.

Sherpa, Pasang Dolma. "The Historical Journey of Indigenous Peoples in Climate Change Negotiation." *IUCN*, The International Union for Conservation of Nature, 30 Dec. 2019, [www.iucn.org/news/commission-environmental-economic-and-social-policy/201912/historical-journey-indigenous-peoples-climate-change-negotiation](http://www.iucn.org/news/commission-environmental-economic-and-social-policy/201912/historical-journey-indigenous-peoples-climate-change-negotiation). Accessed 1 Oct. 2022.

"2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages." *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs*, 12 Jan. 2019, [www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/2019/01/2019-international-year-of-indigenous-languages/](http://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/2019/01/2019-international-year-of-indigenous-languages/). Accessed 1 Oct. 2022.

"United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples." *United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs*, DESA, [www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html](http://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html). Accessed 1 Oct. 2022.

"Who are the Uyghurs and why is China being accused of genocide?" *BBC*, Penguin Random House, 24 May 2022, [www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-22278037](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-22278037). Accessed 1 Oct. 2022.

"World of work a critical arena for minority and indigenous peoples' rights – new global report highlights." *Minority Rights Group International*, 15 June 2022, [www.minorityrights.org/2022/06/15/trends2022](http://www.minorityrights.org/2022/06/15/trends2022). Accessed 28 Sept. 2022.