

## **CLEIMUN19**

“Collaboration in a Polarized World: Hope for the Future?”

A Research Report

COMMITTEE: Human Rights

QUESTION OF: Religious Persecution in Asia

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### **Background**

Article 9 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that the freedom of thought, belief, and religion is a basic human right. Despite this, implicit religious persecution exists in any multinational state; traditionally, the bigger the state, the more varied the conflicts. As a relatable example, there is anti-Muslim bias in many countries today, but predominantly Christian countries such as the United States have had more public issues in confronting such perspectives than predominantly Muslim countries like Iran. However, the greater issue is explicit religious persecution, where any protections for religious freedom are not present in either *de jure* or *de facto* proceedings of countries.

Explicit religious persecution in Asia has become an increasingly urgent issue due to the forced conversion of minorities to the status quo. One extreme example is the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar: the government is supporting and furthering the most recent wave of ethnic cleansing policies against Rohingya Muslims for over a year now. This genocide has caused over half a million Rohingya Muslims to flee to Bangladesh, and about 140 thousand remain internally

displaced in unhealthy conditions. The Uyghur crisis in China is somewhat parallel to the Myanma situation. Despite being an officially recognized ethnic group in China, Uyghur Muslims have been unfairly targeted for basic and nonthreatening cultural aspects, such as their language and practices, and have been placed in state-sponsored re-education camps. Please see the CNN link from August 31, 2018 to further explore the nuances of this topic. There are many instances of Christian persecution in many Asian countries, but please take care to avoid biased sources, as this is a charged topic in majority-Christian interest groups and organizations. The Christian faith has come into great conflict in Asian countries due to the incompatibility with certain Eastern belief systems.

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**Questions to Consider:**

1. How does religious conflict positively and negatively affect a country? Are there any causes or effects specific to the region of Asia and Eastern philosophy?
  2. To what extent should a country founded on the basis of one religious belief system protect an ethnic minority without compromising the human rights of that minority?
  3. To what extent should a secular country realistically keep religion out of society? Should a *de jure* secular society be pressured to engage in the protection of ethnic minorities against societal conflict?
  4. What steps can be taken to ensure these religious groups' human rights, one of which is citizenship, in their respective nations?
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**Past Efforts to Solve This Problem:**

Despite the prevalence of religious conflict in history and the legal protections in place in many Asian countries, as of early September 2018, no legal actions have been taken.

A monetary appeal was set up through various UN agencies for the humanitarian response to the Rohingya crisis in March 2018, but it has not been funded very well and thus has had little impact.

Despite the publication of multiple damning reports regarding the Rohingya and Uyghur crises in August 2018, no actions have been taken.

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### **Possible Solutions:**

Delegates must remember the Universal Declaration of Human Rights when deliberating as the representatives of countries who have drastically different perspectives on the role of religion, the level of protection minorities have, and the repercussions that any conflict in Asia may have on their individual states. Great care must be taken by delegates to prepare and collaborate on solutions that are not religion or country-specific; rather, moderate and widespanning solutions will be the ones most likely to accomplish something in this vast sea of religious conflict in Asia. Delegates must also remember to leave their own personal religious tenets at the door and fully embrace the religious policies of not only the legalities of their governments, but also the sentiments of their respective societies, in order to create a near-ideal solution in the spirit of transparency. Additionally, international bodies are most likely to have power to influence such an important change in the conflict-ridden region of Asia, so any coalitions, including interfaith dialogue, would be looked favorably upon.

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**Links for Reference:**

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/pages/home.aspx>

<https://news.un.org/en/audio/2018/08/1017822>

<https://www.hrw.org/>

<https://www.forum-asia.org/>

<http://www.humanrights.asia/>

<https://www.fidh.org/en/>

<http://www.asiapacificforum.net/>

<https://www.religiousfreedominstitute.org/south-asia/>

## Works Cited

- "Article 9: Freedom of thought, belief and religion." *Equality and Human Rights Commission*, 4 May 2016,  
[www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights-act/article-9-freedom-thought-belief-and-religion](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights-act/article-9-freedom-thought-belief-and-religion).
- Griffiths, James. "China hits back after damning UN report on Uyghur 're-education camps.'" *CNN*, Cable News Network, 31 Aug. 2018,  
[www.cnn.com/2018/08/31/asia/china-xinjiang-uyghur-intl/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2018/08/31/asia/china-xinjiang-uyghur-intl/index.html).
- "Rohingya Crisis." *Human Rights Watch*, [www.hrw.org/tag/rohingya-crisis](http://www.hrw.org/tag/rohingya-crisis).