



# NOVICE 43

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## HUNTINGTON BEACH HIGH SCHOOL



**Security Council #5**  
**Burkina Faso**

Sarah Hart  
Christopher Gartland  
Vivianna Amado

# Welcome Letter

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of the Huntington Beach High School Model United Nations Program, we would like to welcome you to our Novice 43 conference!

Our annual Novice conference upholds the principles and intended purpose of the United Nations. Delegates can expect to partake in a professional, well-run debate that simulates the very issues that those at the United Nations discuss every day. Both novel and traditional ideas will be shared, challenged, and improved.

It is our hope that all delegates will receive the opportunity to enhance their research, public speaking, and communication skills as they explore the intricacies of global concerns through various perspectives, some of which may be very different from their own. We hope their experiences here give them new insight and values that they can apply outside of the realm of Model UN for the betterment of the world community.

Although we will be entertaining a new style of a virtual conference, we hope all delegates will experience a fruitful and enhancing debate. Please do not hesitate to approach our Secretariat or Staff Members with any questions or concerns that you may have throughout the day. We wish the best to all our participants and hope that they may share a fulfilling experience with us! Enjoy the conference.

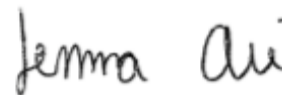
Sincerely,



Summer Balentine  
*Secretary-General*



Kayla Hayashi  
*Secretary-General*



Jenna Ali  
*Secretary-General*



Hailey Holcomb  
*Secretary-General*

## Meet the Dias

### Sarah Hart

Hi! My name is Sarah Hart, I'm a junior, and I've been in MUN for three years. At HBHS I am a staff writer for Slick Magazine (check it out, hbslick.com) and I am in the dance department of the Academy for Performing Arts, where I study ballet and modern. Outside of school you can find me attending dance class, writing, reading, and watching anime. I'm interested in journalism, human rights, peace studies, dance, and literary criticism for after high school. MUN has helped to educate me on humanitarian issues that I am deeply passionate about today, and I hope that this committee will help to educate and inspire you too. Good luck and feel free to ask any questions!

### Christopher Gartland

Hello delegates, my name is Christopher and I am a senior here at HBHS. This is my fourth and sadly, final year in our MUN program. MUN has hands down been one of the best, albeit most stressful experiences of my life. I've learned so much more about politics and current events than I would have ever imagined when I first signed up for freshman year. Outside of MUN I am in our APA programs Technical Theater class, where I specialize in fly rail (think the ropes that make the curtains go up and down). I am also an Eagle Scout at Troop 555. I love camping and hiking, and most recently I have taken up off-roading with my friends.

### Vivianna Amado

Hi delegates! My name is Vivianna Amado and I am a junior here at HBHS. This is my third year in mun and through this program have grown to become a more confident and informed individual. There are so many issues in the world that fail to be properly recognized and bringing awareness to them, in committees such as this one, has to be my favorite part of MUN. Outside of Modeled United Nations, I am on the HBHS Varsity Dance Team and often perform at assemblies and halftime shows. I enjoy spending my time thrifting, reading, getting sushi, watching the sunset, driving around with my best friend, and aimlessly scrolling through pinterest. I have a huge passion for makeup, fashion, and architecture and hope to begin studying in the field of design upon graduating high school. I am so excited to chair for you guys and cannot wait to see what you bring to committee!

**All Papers are due on April 18th, 2021 by 11:59pm to**  
**[sc5novicemun@gmail.com](mailto:sc5novicemun@gmail.com)**

## Burkina Faso

### BACKGROUND

Burkina Faso, while being a country with significant reserves of gold and ample space for agricultural endeavors, has struggled tremendously with security, its economy, and human rights.<sup>1</sup> Being a part of the Sahel Belt, a region across Northern Africa including Burkina Faso and its neighbors, Mauritania, Chad, Mali, and Niger; terrorism and illicit activities have been a major cause of concern for both national and regional governments in the area<sup>2</sup>. In 2019, the issue was so severe that it prompted the resignation of former Prime Minister Paul Thieba<sup>3</sup>, who saw a mass of jihadist violence and kidnappings during their presidency. The two major terrorist organizations seen in the region are Ansarul Islam<sup>4</sup>, the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (GSIM) and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) regularly execute and attack civilians, killing 160 people in the last year, while the military, known as the Burkinabé, lacks strict regulation and in 2020 allegedly executed hundreds of people, according to the Human Rights Watch<sup>5</sup>. The abuses of the Burkinabé include extrajudicial killings during operations across the borders; according to the UN the Burkinabé participated in over 50 killings over the Burkina Faso border in Mali. Although the government has opened investigations towards the abuses of both sides, little real action has been taken. Those in custody for terrorism receive no trial, and defense lawyers are extremely lacking. Islamic radical groups also impose Sharia law, or extremist Islamic law unto courtrooms, so many of the trials that do take place do not adhere to international standards of a fair trial. Maximum security prisons for terrorism are largely overcrowded and many prisoners are held without seeing a judge; some have been held without trial since the start of the conflict in 2016. Terrorist organizations primarily target vulnerable locations such as churches, mosques, schools, and aid convoys, while victims tend to include those with links to the western world, the government, or Christianity. In 2020, there were 45 attacks alone against education institutions, 21 attacks<sup>6</sup> against university professors, parents, and students, and 25 schools were burned from April to August 2020. Although the government closed schools<sup>7</sup> due to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, 2,500 schools had already been closed due to violence, leaving 350,000 youths without an education. Women and girls are also at great risk for sexual violence, while children are especially vulnerable targets; oftentimes extremists utilize improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which kill high risk groups, like children, easily. The National Assembly of Burkina Faso has legalized government support of self-defense groups as of January 2021, including the creation of the program Volunteers for the Defense of the Homeland (VDH). However, these groups have committed serious abuses including instances regarding security forces, but investigation into these situations has been scarce, on both a national and international basis. Many join Islamic extremist groups to fight for land, but most join as an alternative to complete destitution, as Burkina Faso has a lack of job security and infrastructure. There is also a widespread fear that the northern terrorism will spread to the south, where terrorists can gain access to the nation's trade ports and engage in illicit trade.

Furthermore, the effects of the COVID-19 virus and food scarcity has increased dramatically in recent years.<sup>8</sup> At this time, the people within the country that are in need of emergency aid due to starvation number to about 3.2 million<sup>9</sup>, with 11,000 being at a crisis level. As climate change continues to progress and desertification takes place in the region, which is

also subject to extreme drought, farming has become continually more and more difficult. Even so, seeing the amount of agricultural activity and land within Burkina Faso, there should technically be enough food for its people, however, with attacks from extremist groups there are about one million<sup>10</sup> internally displaced people (IDPs) who have left behind their farmland and stocks of harvest to flee violence. The quality of life within displacement encampments IDPs create is extremely low, with high rates of violence, unsanitary conditions, and little access to health services. Refugees from Mali often seek refuge in these camps as well, contributing to overcrowding and higher transmission rates of viruses like COVID-19. Even for those who are not displaced, it is still extremely costly and difficult to move and remain self-reliant during jihadist armed conflict. With these restrictions, it is difficult for the malnourished to have access to hospital treatment. Hospitals in general are not very accessible for the average person in Burkina Faso, 82 have been closed completely due to violence and 243 are only partially functioning due to lack of staffing, funding, and supplies. Just about 850,000 at least are left without any form of healthcare.

Moreover, jihadist groups often weaponize the already existent intercommunal tensions between herders and farmers in the northern farmlands. More than 70% of those who live in the Sahel region live in rural areas as herders or farmers<sup>11</sup>, making the situation all the more multi-faceted.<sup>12</sup> The situation has been altogether worsened by COVID-19 restrictions, which have forced people out of livelihoods and job security. The Sahel region, located in the northernmost portion of Burkina Faso, is in greatest need for aid, however, violence and lack of infrastructure makes aid a rarity. In early August 2020, aid organizations transporting goods to Boucle du Mouhoun, the largest grain producing area in the entire country, were attacked by bands of robbers. While the area is extremely valuable to the economic and humanitarian well-being of the country, violence there is at its worst and has spiked especially in the last year. Multiple outside countries and organizations such as the European Parliament have iterated that they believe the policies of Burkina Faso to fight insurgency with insurgency is unsustainable, and urge the government to conduct thorough investigations towards abuses from both sides. The United States, who have supplied five million USD towards counter terrorism measures and an additional two million USD towards anti-IUD technology has said that some of the killings could place US aid at risk.<sup>13</sup>

## UNITED NATIONS ACTION

In response to growing conflicts in Burkina Faso, the United Nations has actively played a role in outlining specific frameworks, providing humanitarian aid, and advocating peace during the crisis. In 2015, the United Nations adopted a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, of which Burkina Faso quickly decided to include in its political agenda.<sup>14</sup> By doing so, the nation set out “to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all” by implementing sustainable humanitarian actions.<sup>15</sup>

In 2016, Burkina Faso established the National Human Rights Commission, as the United Nations’ Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (UNOHCHR).<sup>16</sup> Under the UNOHCHR, responsibility was to be held in strengthening international human rights mechanisms, countering discrimination, enforcing the rule of law, and protecting all peoples in situations of conflict, violence, and insecurity in the nation.<sup>17</sup> The UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights provided a base level of resources, however, in 2018 as the



conflicts began to worsen as a result of increased jihadist attacks, the United Nations Recommendations to Burkina Faso was released. This document outlined a comprehensive set of 184 goals based on the 2030 SDGs set to improve political, social, economic, civic, and cultural rights.<sup>18</sup> With participation from the government, civil society, and UN bodies such as the UNDP, UNICEF and OHCHR, the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights of Burkina Faso implemented several recommendations.<sup>19</sup> As a result, the death penalty was abolished and the nation saw an increased in protection of victims and witnesses by law. Furthermore, The National Economic and Social Development Plan (PNDES) was revisited to better address social inequalities, newly internally displaced individuals, and the 40% of peoples living below the poverty line.<sup>20</sup> To combat one of the most extreme effects of poverty, food scarcity, for the 535,000 Burkinabés children under the age of five suffering from acute malnutrition, UNICEF began mobilizing health workers to travel across remote areas in Burkina Faso. These healthcare professionals are currently screening and treating malnourished children and strengthening efforts to procure and deliver therapeutic foods. Since January 2020, more than 52,600 cartons of therapeutic food have been delivered to healthcare facilities and 51,700 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition have been treated.<sup>21</sup> Most recently, the UN 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) was established to comprehensively address the 235 million people worldwide including 3.5 million Burkinabés in need of multisectoral humanitarian assistance.<sup>22</sup> Launched by the Global Humanitarian Overview, the HRP aims to accomplish three strategic targets in Burkina Faso by the end of 2021, outlined as such: reducing morbidity and mortality, increasing access to basic necessities, and protecting the rights of all vulnerable peoples affected by the crisis.<sup>23</sup> In addition to UN actions, the World Bank has approved Burkina Faso with \$21.15 million finance to help respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Several NGOs including IntraHealth International, Lutheran World Relief, and The Hunger Project, have also contributed efforts in alleviating the conflicts occurring in Burkina Faso.<sup>24</sup>

### CASE STUDY: EXTREMIST VIOLENCE: GSIM

One of the most prevelant and violant Islamic groups wreaking havoc on Burkina Faso is that of the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (GSIM). This one group alone is responsible for a number of very serious and incredibly deadly attacks within Burkina Faso, one of the most notable of these being an attack in the Capital city, Ouagadougou, as a luxury hotel, resulting in the death of thirty people.<sup>25</sup> The group, which has substantial ties and history with Al Qaeda is also responsible for an attack on the French Embassy in Burkina Faso, which was carried out in coordination with an additional attack on a military base.<sup>26</sup> The unofficial death toll of these attacks is estimated to be in the mid thirties.

Attacks such as these are essentially commonplace in Burkina Faso, and have been for multiple years now. The national government has done little to mitigate the effects that these acts of violence have, mostly due to their being overwhelmed by the sheer number of jihadist gropus and attacks that they are expected to maintain and overcome.<sup>27</sup> Targets of smaller attacks include state affiliated systems and buildings, such as police, military, and schools. Regarding education alone, more than one thousand schools have been closed due to the threat of violence.

The two groups that conjoined to form the GSIM have also shown their support for the newer leader of a native jihadist extremist group, Ansarual Islam. The former leader died in 2017, and his brother took over in his place in a transfer of power that went smoothly and well

supported. These groups together have undeniably altered the state of Burkina Faso for the worse, with civil unrest, violent attacks, food shortages, and unemployment all resulting from their actions.

According to more recent statistics, now over one million people in Burkina Faso have been displaced from their homes due to extremist violence, with incidents peaking at over 500 attacks just from 2019-2020.<sup>28</sup> The UN is taking notice of these attacks and the serious displacement of people that they have caused, stating that 'It's the tip of the iceberg' and if things are not improved upon soon, the nation will have 'to see a loss of life' greater than ever before.<sup>29</sup>

## QUESTIONS

1. How might humanitarian missions and international efforts work around the threat of extremist violence towards their operations?
2. What more could the government/military of Burkina Faso be doing to minimize the negative impact of the humanitarian crisis?
3. Does your country have any experience with refugees or the internally displaced? How might your policies be applicable to this situation?
4. Does your country deal with terrorism at all? How has your country dealt with instances of violence within your borders?
5. How might a nation work to minimize conflict between two religious or ethnic groups?
6. What improvements can be made to the state of displacement camps, where refugees and the internally displaced reside?

## ENDNOTES

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