



**18TH-20TH JUNE, 2018**



**UNHRC**

**PROTECTION OF HUMANITARIAN AID  
WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS**

# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

## Defending the Defenders

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the simulation of the UNHRC at SSMUN 2018. As your chairperson I shall be providing you with a few pointers on where to get started with your committee preparation. At the very outset, it begs mention that this document is not a study guide. This is a very carefully written letter which has been penned after extensive research on our agenda. I can promise you that no facet of the agenda will remain unknown if you truly understand the ethos of this letter. A conventional study guide gives you a context to the agenda, places events against the backdrop of greater powers and their relationships with one another. They furnish facts to augment your knowledge. They inform you about agreements, memorandums and treaties relevant to the agenda. However, what they fail to impart is the ability to reason and extrapolate beyond or beneath what we know to be discernible facts. 'ethos, pathos, logos' - these are the tools of international persuasion, the simple essence underlying any policy, regardless of intent, whether it be assistance, coercion, unilateral sanctions or even peaceful disarmament. I do not intend to spoon-feed information; what I would rather do is equip you with the tools required to

understand how diplomacy functions and apply them yourselves. The agenda deals with a very simple yet persistent problem. The security of human rights workers/volunteers has been at threat for quite a while now. However, it is only recently that this serious issue has been taken up by the UN. Now, whenever we face a problem of gargantuan proportions we need to identify the causative reasons for such issues. While researching for this agenda, bear in mind that this is a problem prevalent in all continents, albeit of a greater nature in some than others.

### **For your eyes only!**

I would advise you to begin with the instances/examples of your agenda and then try to connect these separate examples on the basis of a common reason which triggers them. There is no right or wrong analysis - everything depends on how well you can justify your burden, your proposition. Secondly, this problem bears close resemblance to those being faced by the UN peacekeeping forces in 16 African states as we speak. There are fundamental differences in roles, given the nature of their employment. However, civilian security in a war zone can never be taken for granted. Protection of protectors is a noble path, but the path of the righteous is beset with thorns on all sides. Logistical issues, as well as inter-governmental horn-locking often pose hindrances to the seemingly simple solutions. I do not wish to curb your train of thought by citing specific instances. Diplomats get briefed before a council meeting,

and each national briefing is unique in its set of demands/ agendas. Therefore, it will be unwise to ask all delegates to be preparing from the same foundational document. Every delegate is at liberty to investigate as many facets of the issue as may seem plausible. Only then will we get a plethora of angles and perspectives on a seemingly unitary topic. Nothing is forbidden, everything is permitted. I assure you once again that you do not need to be afraid of procedural inconsistencies, as everything will be explained during the first two hours of committee proceedings. All I request of you is an understanding of the ethos, apathy and neutrality related to the agenda item. Legislative/documented/policy research is secondary. Simplify the argument into low level logic blocks that can be connected to each other by threads of logic/stimuli. Only when we have properly diagnosed, can we properly prescribe.

For everything else, you can count on me

**Yours truly,  
Souryadeep Basak**