

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee



Chair: Ben Mitchell

Co-Chair:

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Letter from the Director-General

Hi everyone!

My name is Jake Cournoyer and I am thrilled to be the Director-General for the eighteenth iteration of ALMUN! I am a junior here at the University of Alabama majoring in Communication Studies and Political Science with a minor in American Studies on the Pre-Law Track. I attended ALMUN when I was in high school and now serve as the Head Delegate of the University of Alabama's Model United Nations Team, so this conference holds a special place in my heart.

It has been so fulfilling to see all the hard work that has gone into this conference to make sure it is an unforgettable weekend. We have a diverse group of committees ranging from the Federal Reserve Board of Governors to KPop Demon Hunters that I can not wait to see delegates interact with! With that being said, we are committed to making ALMUN the best we possibly can for our delegates. Please do not hesitate if you have any questions, comments, or concerns to direct them to my email below (many of the Chairs and Crisis Directors for committees have also chosen to do so and provided their emails in their respective letters).

On behalf of the entire staff, we can not wait to have you in Tuscaloosa!

Roll Tide!

Jake Cournoyer

Director-General of ALMUN XVIII

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Letter from the Chair

Delegates,

Welcome to Tuscaloosa for the eighteenth iteration of ALMUN! My name is Ben Mitchell and I am excited for our weekend together as the Special Political and Decolonization Committee. ALMUN will give you a unique opportunity to explore The University of Alabama's campus and the broader Tuscaloosa area. It is my sincere hope that each of you will have much fun and further develop your skills in diplomacy, public speaking, writing, and parliamentary procedure over our time together.

Please allow me to briefly introduce myself. I am an honors student in International Studies, with a concentration in International Relations and the field of Central/South America. My minors are in Spanish and the Blount Scholars Program. I am a past delegate of ALMUN XV, XVI, and XVII and most recently served as a staffer for the AIRMUNC VI conference. Outside of my studies and Model UN activities, you can often find me at The Wesley Foundation.

I deliberately chose our topics precisely because the international community has made no recent progress towards resolving them. These are longstanding disputes over valuable territory resulting, at least in part, from previous colonial activities. I do not expect for this committee to unilaterally solve these issues, but I hope that you all will develop meaningful next steps towards a safer and prosperous future. To do this, please ensure that you are prepared for the conference weekend. I highly encourage reading the background guide, researching your state's position and potential solutions, and writing position papers as a good starting place.

Should you have any questions before the conference, you are most welcome to email me at the address below. Please know that after the conference, all contact through the email will be closed for delegates.

Regards,

Ben Mitchell

btmitchell3@crimson.ua.edu

A Note on Research, Preparation, & Position Papers

Your experience as an ALMUN delegate begins during the time spent leading up to the conference. Proper research and preparation are key to a successful and valuable experience at ALMUN and any MUN conference. For new delegates, this preparation may seem like a daunting task. However, the ALMUN staff is here to help, and these notes should help you structure your lead-up time.

The first place to start your research should be your committee's Background Guide. This is a document prepared by committee staff for their specific committees' delegates. It contains historical contexts, overviews of your topics, and what the staffers will expect from delegates. This document is the perfect jumping off point for all of your research and will also help understand the innerworkings, schematics, and purpose of your character/country assignment as well as your role as a delegate during the conference. These documents can be found on the ALMUN website under your committee. **The Delegate Handbook is also extremely helpful and goes in depth into all things Model UN, gives important definitions and examples, and even shows examples of successful position papers. This can be found [here](#) !**

GENERAL & SPECIALIZED ASSEMBLIES POSITION PAPER FORMATTING

- GA & SA position papers should be two pages, each topic taking up one page. The topics should be separated by a page break. Do not exceed two pages.
- The document should be in single spaced, 12 pt, black, Times New Roman font.
- The document should begin with a three line header on the left side as follows:

Name of Delegate
Delegate's County Assignment

Delegate's Committee

- Following the header, delegates should center and identify the title of the committee, as follows:

Topic A: [Insert Title of Topic]

- Any references should be cited using footnotes in MLA format. When citing electronic sources, include the URL; electronic sources are strongly encouraged for ease of reference.
- **Position papers should be saved as a PDF file and entitled “ALMUN XV_[Committee]_[Country Name].”**

CONTENT OF GENERAL & SPECIALIZED ASSEMBLIES POSITION PAPERS

Position papers should include three paragraphs, outlined as follows:

1. **The first paragraph** introduces the topic from the point of view of the nation represented. It discussed the history of the topic, specifically in relation to the country.
2. **The second paragraph** analyzes the topic's context in the nation and expresses most of the research done on the topic. It discusses past action or inaction, success or failure, and the nation's current thoughts and feelings on the issue.
3. **The third paragraph** consists of an informed discussion of solutions to be proposed by the delegate(s) at the conference. It uses the research done on the topic and synthesizes it into new and creative ideas based on the nation represented by the student.

OTHER TIPS & NOTES

- Do not write in first person! Instead, write as the nation represented (e.g. “The Republic of Burkina Faso leans...”)
- Avoid the passive voice.
- Write matter-of-factly rather than with embellished language.

Please submit all position papers to [this Google Form](#) no later than Thursday, March 5th at 11:59 p.m. CT.

Please note that Position Papers are not required, but make you eligible for the “Best Position Paper” award in committee and are a great way to prepare for committee!

Committee Premise

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECOL), the General Assembly's Fourth Committee, draws its membership from all UN member states. Initially, its purpose was to supervise decolonization in the post-World War II period. Following the independence of most trust territories, the General Assembly added the "special political" designation to the committee to broaden its approach.¹ Now, SPECOL coordinates decolonization, atomic radiation, information gathering, peacekeeping, outer space, and conflict resolution efforts in the Middle East.²

The world has a variety of longstanding and stalemated territorial conflicts. Many of these are caused, at least in part, by previous colonization efforts. Among these are the Falkland/Malvinas Islands and Somaliland. Our task as members of SPECOL is to move the needle towards the resolution of these colonial-induced disputes. Over the course of the weekend, delegates are expected to advocate for their country's position and to propose insightful resolutions that fit within the scope of our committee's efforts.

Delegates are primarily encouraged to propose political solutions to the matters at hand, while also being mindful of the committee's role as a part of the General Assembly. All acts of the committee should strive to reflect the views of the international community, provide moral support, develop non-binding principles, and/or put political pressure on states. While delegates may recommend solutions and seek consensus, they cannot impose any binding measure on a state. The language of proposed resolutions

¹United Nations. "The Committees: From the Colonies to the Space Race - Past, Present, Future Converge in Fourth Committee." UN News, December 28, 2018. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/12/1029481>.

²United Nations. "General Assembly of the United Nations: Special Political and Decolonization." United Nations. Accessed November 24, 2025. <https://www.un.org/en/ga/fourth/>.

should reflect this principle. Please do not infringe on the authority of the Security Council to pass binding resolutions³.

Adequate solutions should consider the political control of the given territories, the will of the local people (self-determination), languages spoken, competing claims, the consensus of the international community, historical events, conflict resolution, and previous efforts to solve crises, as well as other pertinent information. A one size fits all approach is unlikely to be successful in the long term. Delegates should heavily tailor their approach to fit the specific situations at hand.

TOPIC A: THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

Introduction

The Falkland Islands / Las Islas Malvinas are remote islands in the southern Atlantic Ocean, approximately 300 miles (ca. 483 km) from the southern tip of Argentina. The main islands of East Falkland and West Falkland comprise the territory with about 200 smaller islands. Together, their land mass is about the size of the U.S. state of Connecticut.

³United Nations, "How Decisions Are Made at the UN," United Nations, accessed November 13, 2025, <https://www.un.org/en/model-united-nations/how-decisions-are-made-un>.



Figure 1. *BBC Map of the Falkland Islands.*⁴

Approximately 2,500 people (excluding British military personnel) live on the islands. They are primarily descendants of British settlers and speak English. Most of the population lives in Stanley (also called Port Stanley), the capital, while a small minority live in isolated communities. The main industries are sheep farming, tourism, and fishing. The islands also are surrounded by significant oil fields which have been explored, but no drilling has occurred due to opposition from the British government. The islanders use the Falkland Pound for currency, which is directly tied to the British Pound.

Currently, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland maintains control over the Falklands. The islands operate as self-governing overseas territories of

⁴ British Broadcasting Corporation, *Falkland Islands Profile*, September 7, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-18425572>.

the United Kingdom under the Falkland Islands Constitution (2009). Its governor is appointed by the British monarch, while many other positions are elected under the constitutional monarchy form of government.⁵

While the British government also claims and controls other islands in the South Atlantic, including the South Sandwich islands, the focus of this committee will solely be on the Falkland Islands. Delegates are welcome to discuss the other two island groups to provide context, but primary attention must be paid to the Falklands themselves.⁶

In addition to the various British activities, the Argentine Republic also claims the islands as their own, invoking the name “Las Islas Malvinas” to refer to them. Due to the dispute between the UK and Argentina over the islands, the United Nations often takes a middle of the road approach with regard to nomenclature, using the form “Falkland Islands (Malvinas)” in official documents. It should be noted that to follow the conventions of standard English and for ease of use, I will use the term “Falkland Islands” in this document. However, delegates are encouraged to use the term most representative of their own country’s position on the islands throughout the conference.

History (1690-1984)

In 1690, the first recorded landing on the Falklands was made by English navigator John Strong, and he named them after Viscount Falkland, a British naval official. Later, the French navigator Louis-Antoine de Bougainville founded the first settlement on East Falkland in 1764, naming the islands the Malovines. One year later in 1765, the British settled West Falkland, but were driven out in 1770 by the Spanish who

⁵ Britannica Editors, “Falkland Islands,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, July 20, 1998, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Falkland-Islands>.

⁶ Britannica Editors, “Falkland Islands,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, July 20, 1998, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Falkland-Islands>.

bought the French settlement in 1767. The British presence was restored in 1771 after a threat of war, but they withdrew in 1774 for economic reasons relating to the looming American War of Independence (without renouncing their claims to the islands). The Spanish continued their presence on East Falkland (which they called Soledad Island) until 1811.

In 1816, Argentina declared independence from Spain and in 1820, they declared sovereignty over the Falklands. Seal hunting and related tensions led a U.S. warship to destroy the Argentine settlement on East Falkland in 1831. British forces removed the remaining Argentine officials from the islands without violence in 1833. By 1885, the British had appointed a civilian leader for the islands and a permanent population began to develop.

No major changes occurred until after World War II, when the newly established United Nations began to debate sovereignty and colonization issues. The status of the islands was first debated in the Decolonization Committee, of which SPECOL is its successor, in 1964. The General Assembly approved a resolution in 1965 asking Britain and Argentina to hold discussions on the islands.⁷ Throughout the debates and diplomacy, the states' arguments have emerged.

Argentina makes its claims for the islands as follows:

- The Treaty of Tordesillas (1494), in which Spain and Portugal divided the “New World” with guidance from Pope Alexander VI⁸
- Succession from Spain

⁷ Britannica Editors, “Falkland Islands,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, July 20, 1998, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Falkland-Islands>.

⁸ Britannica Editors. “Treaty of Tordesillas.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, July 20, 1998. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Treaty-of-Tordesillas>.

- The islands' proximity to South America and to Argentina
- Territorial integrity
- Self-determination rights are non-existent as the permanent population on the islands was established by a colonial power⁹
- The need to end colonialism¹⁰

The UK makes its claims for the islands as follows:

- Uninterrupted possession of the islands since 1833
- Self-determination rights of the residents (who prefer British control)
- The presence of British citizens on the islands¹¹
- Argentine rule would actually create a new colonial situation¹²

In early 1982, the Argentine military government gave up on negotiations and instead invaded the islands. This was a political decision, with the Argentina military junta believing that a patriotic recovery of the islands would help unite the people.

Furthermore, it would distract from broad criticism of the military over human rights issues.

⁹ This statement can be made in general terms. It should be noted that some Argentine officials have expressed more openness to self-determination rights. See Javier Lorca, "Milei Backs Self-Determination for Falkland Islanders: 'We Hope One Day They Will Vote with Their Feet,'" *Ediciones EL PAÍS S.L.*, April 3, 2025, <https://english.elpais.com/international/2025-04-03/milei-backs-self-determination-for-falkland-islanders-we-hope-one-day-they-will-vote-with-their-feet.html>.

¹⁰ Britannica Editors, "Falkland Islands," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, July 20, 1998, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Falkland-Islands>.

¹¹ EBSCO. "Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas)." Accessed November 28, 2025. <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/social-sciences-and-humanities/falkland-islands-islas-malvinas>.

¹² Britannica Editors, "Falkland Islands," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, July 20, 1998, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Falkland-Islands>.

On April 2, 1982, the Argentine invasion began, and they quickly took control over the small British force at Port Stanley. After the Falklands, the Argentines seized South Georgia, which they also claimed. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom declared a war zone for 200 miles (ca. 322 km) around the Falklands and assembled a naval task force. Following unsuccessful mediation attempts, the United States allowed the UK to use some of its military equipment stockpiled at British-held Ascension Island. On April 25, 1982, while the large British task force was steaming towards the war zone, a smaller British force retook South Georgia island and captured one Argentinian submarine. In a controversial action, the British sunk the Argentine Cruiser *General Belgrano* outside of the war zone. British naval forces and Argentine land forces fought a variety of battles. In the end, a weakened Argentina was unable to prevent a British landing on the islands, which occurred on May 21 on East Falkland. On June 14, the remaining Argentine forces surrendered. On June 20, the British removed a small Argentine garrison on the South Sandwich Islands.



Figure 2. *Third Battalion, Parachute Regiment Disembark from a Landing Craft during the Landings at San Carlos*¹³

In the aftermath of the war, 650 Argentinian and 255 British soldiers had died. The Argentine military government was discredited and fell in 1983, when civilian rule

¹³Graham Colbeck and The Imperial War Museum, *3 Battalion, Parachute Regiment Disembark from a Landing Craft during the Landings at San Carlos, 1982*, <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/205018234>.

was restored. Prime Minister Thatcher of the UK used the victory to win a landslide victory in the next British election.¹⁴

Timeline

1690 - first recorded landing of the islands is made by English navigator John Strong, who names the islands the “Falklands”

1764 - French found the first settlement on East Falkland, name islands Malovines

1765 - British settle West Falkland

1767 - Spanish purchase French settlement on East Falkland

1770 - British driven out by the Spanish

1771 - British restore their presence in the islands

1774 - British leave the islands due to economic reasons (but do not renounce their claims to the islands)

1811 - Spanish end their presence on East Falkland (Soledad Island)

¹⁴ Britannica Editors, “Falkland Islands War,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, July 20, 1998, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Falkland-Islands-War>.

1816 - Argentina declares independence from Spain

1820 - Argentina claims sovereignty over the Falklands

1833 - British remove remaining Argentinians from the islands

1964 - UN General Assembly begins to discuss the islands

1982 - Argentina gives up on negotiations, invades the islands, Falkland Islands war,
British retake the islands

2009 - Falkland Islands adopts a new constitution

Current Situation

The United Nations has long sought a solution to the conflict. For its part, Argentina believes that the dispute is primarily related to sovereignty (which state controls the territory) and not about the self-determination of the local peoples. The issue is further complicated for Argentina in that should they recognize the self-determination rights of the people of the Falklands, they are accepting that British citizens of the Falklands have the rights to resolve a conflict to which their own country is a party. Argentina further claims that the initial British population, from which the current residents have descended, illegally entered Argentine territory in 1833 and subsequently has no self-determination rights.¹⁵

The UK continues to maintain control over a number of disputed territories. It recently returned control of the Chagos Islands to Mauritius, which Argentina believes were in a similar circumstance to the Falklands. However, current UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer has said that both the Falklands and Gibraltar (a dispute with Spain) will remain British¹⁶. From a legal perspective, the UK has given the residents of the Falklands increasing self-governance, especially in the current Falklands Constitution of 2009¹⁷. In 2013, islanders overwhelmingly voted to remain as a UK territory.¹⁸

¹⁵ Republic of Argentina, "Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization Committee)," Permanent Mission to the United Nations, accessed November 13, 2025, <https://enaun.cancilleria.gob.ar/en/content/fourth-committee-special-political-and-decolonization-committee>.

¹⁶ Chas Geiger, "Falklands and Gibraltar Will Remain British, Keir Starmer Pledges," *BBC News*, October 9, 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cx2y9yrnprro>.

¹⁷ Government of the Falkland Islands, "About the Falkland Islands Constitution," The Legislative Assembly of the Falkland Islands, accessed November 13, 2025, <https://assembly.gov.fk/the-constitution/about>.

¹⁸ British Broadcasting Corporation, "Falklands Referendum: Voters Choose to Remain UK Territory," *BBC News*, March 11, 2013, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-21750909>.

SPECOL has maintained that the Falklands are a special case that does not always follow standard post-colonial practices.¹⁹ The islands have been listed on the UN's list of non-self governing territories since 1946. GA resolutions have continually called for the resumption of negotiations on the matter, but no new talks between the United Kingdom and Argentina have occurred.²⁰ The conflict is at a stalemate. The discovery of oil off the coast of the islands further complicates matters, as it provides a significant economic advantage to controlling the Falklands.²¹

Past and Potential Solutions

The parties have never successfully adopted any past solution. This is likely related to an all or nothing approach by both Argentina and the United Kingdom that makes the islands an indivisible good. Previous efforts have led to either armed conflict or a breakdown in talks. Some potential solutions include (but are certainly not limited to) the following choices:

I. Status quo

In the status quo solution, absolutely nothing changes. Some may not even consider it to be a solution, as the conflict will never be truly resolved. The British will still control the islands, the islands will maintain their current governance structure, and Argentina will continue its protests.

¹⁹ Republic of Argentina, "Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization Committee)," Permanent Mission to the United Nations, accessed November 13, 2025, <https://enaun.cancilleria.gob.ar/en/content/fourth-committee-special-political-and-decolonization-committee>.

²⁰ Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), Resolution A/AC.109/2003/24 (2003), <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/497557?ln=en&v=pdf>.

²¹ Russell Searancke, "Farm-out Momentum Builds for Major Falklands Discovery," Upstreamonline.Com, September 25, 2025, <https://www.upstreamonline.com/exploration/farm-out-momentum-builds-for-major-falklands-discovery/2-1-1876697>.

II. Joint-sovereignty

For a joint-sovereignty solution, both the UK and Argentina are recognised as having valid claims to the islands. Some kind of power-sharing agreement is established. This would likely result in a shared structure of governance in which both British and Argentinian officials play a role. The downside of any joint-sovereignty solution is that it ignores the will of the residents of the islands and mostly cuts them out of the decision-making process.

III. Fully autonomous region of Argentina

In this solution, the islands are “returned” to Argentina and are given special status as fully autonomous. The Argentinian government would likely agree not to have any military presence on the islands and would have to limit migration to the islands. Ultimately, while the Argentine flag is on the flagpoles, the islanders themselves control all aspects of the governance. However, the current state of Argentine governance and economic affairs do not make islanders extremely willing to participate in Argentinian affairs.

IV. Independence

For this solution, neither claim is recognized, and the islanders are established as their own state. While significant in principle, the small size of both land and population makes it difficult for the islands to operate as their own state. They would need significant help from outside states, which could continue the conflict indirectly. The size issue might be resolved with a compact of free association.

Delegates are highly encouraged to propose their own solutions and/or adapt and combine those solutions listed above at the conference. Please remember that as a GA Committee, our actions are not necessarily legally binding on a state.²²

Questions to Consider

1. Do the people of the Falklands have self-determination rights? Is Argentina's territorial integrity and sovereignty more important than self-determination? How is self-determination applied when there is a dispute over territory?
2. With the failure of efforts to restart negotiations between the UK and Argentina, should the committee recommend a different approach? If so, what should this new approach be?
3. What role can SPECOL and the General Assembly have in finding a long term solution to this dispute? Does the committee have a recommendation for a specific solution to resolve the crisis? Or is it outside of the role of the committee to encourage a specific solution?
4. Does the international community believe that one state has a better claim to the islands than the other? If so, does Argentina or the UK have a better claim?
5. Should the Falklands continue to be listed as a non-self-governing territory?
6. What name for the islands should this committee use to refer to them?

²² A longer note about the role of the committee as a General Assembly can be found in the "Committee Premise" section of this Background Guide.

TOPIC B: THE REPUBLIC OF SOMALILAND

Introduction

The Republic of Somaliland is a self-declared independent state in East Africa. It is bordered by Puntland, a semi-autonomous region of Somalia, Djibouti, and Ethiopia. To the North, the Gulf of Aden provides access to the Indian Ocean. Somaliland's entire territory is claimed by the Republic of Somalia, a U.N. member-state.



Figure 3. *BBC Map of the Horn of Africa*²³

²³British Broadcasting Corporation. *Somaliland Profile*. January 2, 2024. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14115069>.

History

In the 19th century, the scramble for Africa brought European colonialists to the shores of the African continent. Various European powers controlled the Eastern region of Africa that has become Somalia. However, regional and global wars led to the region's governing power changing several times. Following World War II, the British took control of Italy's former territories. After this, the British and Italian territories in the region were united to form the independent Republic of Somaliland in 1960. Five days later, Somaliland merged with the Somali Republic (also called Somalia, Republic of Somalia). French Somaliland, which bordered the British/Italian territories, became independent as the Republic of Djibouti in 1977.

In the 1980s, a civil war broke out in Somalia which led to the overthrow of the government. The lingering issues of this war have never been fully resolved and conflict still persists. In 1991, the Somali National Movement, an opposition group, took control of the region formerly known as British Somaliland. In the same year, they proclaimed that the 1960 federation was no longer valid. Instead, a new state - The Republic of Somaliland - was established. It should also be noted that the Republic of Somaliland views itself as the legal successor to the 1960, five day long Republic of Somaliland.

Somaliland enjoyed relative stability compared to Somalia, where the civil war continued. Due to the ending of some conflict in Somaliland, the Somaliland government was able to rebuild infrastructure that was damaged during the previous conflicts. However, a border dispute still exists between Somaliland and Puntland, an

area of Northwestern Somalia that declared itself to be an autonomous region of Somalia in 1998.²⁴

In 2001, the government of Somaliland held a referendum for its citizens in which 97% of the inhabitants of the region voted to remain independent.²⁵ In 2003, a round of peace talks were proposed with the goal of reunifying Somalia, but Somaliland refused to participate. Somaliland cited the 2001 referendum and stated that its independent status prevented its participation in the talks.²⁶



Figure 4. Somaliland Celebration of Independence²⁷

²⁴ Britannica Editors. "Somaliland." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, July 20, 1998. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Somaliland>.

²⁵ British Broadcasting Corporation. *Somaliland Profile*. January 2, 2024. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14115069>.

²⁶ Britannica Editors. "Somaliland." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, July 20, 1998. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Somaliland>.

²⁷ Horn Observer.

<https://Hornobserver.Com/Articles/2753/33-Years-Have-Passed-since-Somaliland-Reclaimed-Its-Independence-from-Somalia>. May 17, 2024.

Somaliland celebrated the 25th anniversary of its self-declared independence despite a lack of international recognition in 2016. In December 2023, Somalia declared that it was ready to resume talks. One week later, hopes of talks were destroyed when Somaliland signed a Memorandum of Understanding (abbreviated to MoU) with Ethiopia. Landlocked Ethiopia got access to 20 km of coastline within Somaliland to build a naval base. Somalia was incredibly mad, because they believed that Somaliland could not lease land to another state that Somalia rightfully owns. There was immense pressure in the Horn of Africa region until talks mediated by Turkey brought Somalia and Ethiopia to the negotiating table.²⁸ While discussing this MoU is perfectly fine, it will not be the primary focus of this committee as determining the validity of an agreement is largely outside of our jurisdiction.

To further complicate matters, the State of Israel became the first and only U.N. member-state to recognise Somaliland as an independent state on December 27, 2025. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel praised the previous Abraham Accords negotiated by U.S. President Trump as the inspiration for the move, but no exact reason is known.²⁹ It is possibly related to a now-abandoned peace plan under which

²⁸ Mariel Ferragamo, "Somaliland: The Horn of Africa's Breakaway State," Council on Foreign Relations, January 21, 2025,

<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/somaliland-horn-africas-breakaway-state#chapter-title-0-7>.

²⁹ Reuters. "Israel Becomes First Country to Formally Recognise Somaliland as Independent State." *Reuters*, December 27, 2025.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-recognises-somaliland-somalias-breakaway-region-independent-state-2025-12-26/>.

Somaliland would be asked to accept Palestinians from Gaza.³⁰ ³¹ The African Union, along with other international groups, has condemned the move.³² This is a very recent international development. Therefore, delegates are encouraged to stay updated with this situation.³³ When discussing the current state of the Middle East, please ensure that rhetoric is appropriate to your state's position and is not demeaning towards any other delegate, people, or state.

Timeline

1960 - British and Italian territories are united, the Republic of Somaliland is created, Somaliland merges with the Somali Republic (Somalia)

1977 - French Somaliland becomes independent as the Republic of Djibouti

1980s - Republic of Somalia undergoes civil war

1991 - Somali National Movement seizes Somaliland, declare themselves to be a new state

³⁰ Federman, Josef, Matthew Lee, and Samy Magdy. "US and Israel Float Palestinians Being Moved to African Countries." *AP News*, March 14, 2025.

<https://apnews.com/article/israel-palestinians-gaza-trump-somaliland-sudan-somalia-575e03aaa0c487bae2fbadfd8f5ca3>.

³¹ *AP News*. "More Countries Reject Israel's Recognition of Somaliland." December 27, 2025.

<https://apnews.com/article/somalia-somaliland-recognition-israel-0643e819cc043163d7a81c91617232a9>.

³² Associated Press. "African Regional Bodies Reject Somaliland's Recognition as Independent Nation by Israel." *PBS News*, December 27, 2025.

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/african-regional-bodies-reject-somalilands-recognition-as-independent-nation-by-israel>.

³³ Due to publication deadlines that allow delegates adequate time to fully prepare for the conference, the background guide will not be updated further relating to this ongoing situation. This background guide is updated to December 29, 2025.

2001 - Somaliland votes to remain independent

2003 - Proposed peace talks between Somalia and Somaliland fail

2016 - 25th Anniversary of Somaliland independence

2023 - Proposed peace talks between Somalia and Somaliland fail again

2024 - Somalia and Somaliland sign an MoU

2025 - Israel recognizes Somaliland as an independent state

Current Situation

The international community generally accepts the Montevideo Convention's definition of a state as having a permanent population, a defined territory, a government, and a capacity to enter into relationships with other states.³⁴ This recognition is an important part of the statehood process and would be necessary for Somaliland to continue towards its goal of future U.N. membership.

Somaliland's lack of wide recognition as a state is especially problematic. It prevents its participation in international organizations, including the distribution of

³⁴ Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1933).
<https://www.ilsa.org/Jessup/Jessup15/Montevideo%20Convention.pdf>.

foreign aid that could alleviate rampant poverty and food insecurity. Their inclusion on the international stage would also allow for development and investment by multinational corporations and banks.

The United States and Somalia, along with some other states hold to a “One Somalia” policy - that Somalia is and forever should be one state. With the change in American presidential administrations in 2024, some in Somaliland expect recognition by the United States to be right around the corner due to connections between Trump Administration officials and policy preparation documents.³⁵ However, nothing has changed as of the writing of this background guide.

Somaliland continues to self-advocate, even through diplomatic means. They have a longstanding relationship with the Republic of China (also known as Taiwan or Chinese Taipei). Somaliland also has “representative offices,” which are de-facto embassies without recognition or legal protections, in several countries. It should be noted here that SPECOL *cannot grant recognition*, but it can debate the political implications of recognition, self-determination rights, colonial history, explore precedents, and recommend mediation leading towards recognition.

With regard for the new recognition of Somaliland by Israel, many new questions have arisen. However, no significant changes have occurred at the transnational level. The committee is encouraged to discuss these new developments.

Past and Potential Solutions

No past solution has been successful. It is difficult to even get Somalia and Somaliland to the negotiating table, as neither is willing to compromise even an inch of

³⁵ Mary Harper, “Why Somalilanders Are Smitten with Donald Trump,” *BBC News*, January 16, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cp3j1qn0499o>.

their positions. A few potential solutions are described below, but delegates are more than welcome (even encouraged) to propose alternate or varying solutions according to their states' preferences. Final solutions should take into account all of the questions to consider. The provided list below should just be starting places.

I. Self-governing territory

One common proposal is for Somaliland to become a completely self-governing territory of Somalia. Somalia might accept this proposal but it would be difficult for Somaliland to accept in light of its independence referendums.

II. Status quo (no change)

The status quo benefits absolutely no one. Somalia does not get to exert its power over areas that it claims and Somaliland suffers due to a lack of recognition. It only continues the issues discussed in this background guide.

III. Independence with Free Association

Alternatively, Somaliland could be declared a fully independent state with some form of free association deal. This would likely give Somalia de-facto military and international relations control but allow Somaliland to have independent domestic policy, but variations should be considered.

IV. Full Independence

Somaliland could also be given full independence through international recognition, leading to its participation in international institutions and the global economic community.

Questions to Consider

1. Do the people of Somaliland have self-determination rights? Does its colonial history play a role in determining self-determination rights? Is Somaliland's situation an unfinished decolonization issue?
2. Does Somaliland meet the requirements for statehood under the Montevideo Convention or other international practice? What about the lack of international recognition?
3. How can the risk of conflict between Somaliland and Somalia and other regional tensions be minimized?
4. How can problems arising from Somaliland's exclusion from international organizations (including its inability to receive international aid) be resolved?
5. What impact does Israel's recognition of Somaliland have for the international community? Does it show that this issue should be reevaluated? Should the international community express its support or opposition to the move?

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