



Eben, Armaan, Pyaas, Maxwell



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Letter from the Chairs

Hello delegates and welcome to HUMUNC! My name is Armaan Hossain and I am in 11th grade. This is my second year doing Model U.N and I have attended 5 conferences so far. My passion for global politics is what had made me join Model U.N. Although Model U.N can initially be challenging, it is also very fun as you develop better speaking and communication skills as well as make new friends along the way. Outside of Model U.N, I enjoy playing video games, watching history videos on Youtube, and going for walks around the neighborhood. I hope you will all enjoy our Simulation of ASEAN this year. I am looking forward to meeting you all at HMUNC!

Sincerely,

Armaan

Welcome to HMUNC! My name is Eben Thomas and I am a 10th grader. It is my first time taking Model UN and I have attended 1 conference so far. Model UN has become one of my passions and has taught me a lot about foreign affairs and made me a lot more knowledgeable about the world around me. Outside of Model UN, I enjoy watching sports, playing video games, and playing basketball with my friends. I hope you will all enjoy our simulation of ASEAN this year. I am looking forward to meeting all of you and being your chair this year at HMUNC!

Sincerely,

Eben

My name is Pyaas Majumder and I am in 11th grade. This is my first time taking Model UN conference and I have attended 1 conference so far this year. As International Affairs have always been my passion, I have always been so fascinated by Model UN! It's amazing how delegates from all over the world come together to create a better world for tomorrow. Outside of Model UN, I love reading and watching Marvel movies, window shopping, gardening, dishwashing, playing badminton, and singing. I hope you will enjoy our simulation of ASEAN this year. I am looking forward to meeting all of you and being your chair this year at HMUNC!

Sincerely,

Pyaas

Welcome to HMUNC! My name is Maxwell Yang and I am a Sophomore here at Herricks. It is my second year in Model UN and I have been to four conferences. Model UN has been a club that is out of my comfort zone, and I have been able to express myself and debate in ways that I have never done in my normal classes. Besides Model UN, I'm on the track and cross country teams, and am also part of vocal jazz. Besides singing, I also play flute in band and piano on the side. I hope you will all cherish and enjoy the two days we will be together, and I am looking forward to having the honor of being your chair at HMUNC!

Sincerely,

Maxwell

Our Committee Email: aseanhmuncxviii@gmail.com



How to Use this Guide

Dear delegates,

This is the background guide for ASEAN at HMUNC 2023. As your chairs, we have spent a lot of time writing and gathering research in order to create the best possible guide for you, in hopes that it will aid you in your research and debate. We hope that you take some time to read this, as it'll provide a helpful guideline to the topics you will be discussing in debate as well as the potential solutions you may propose. This background guide should serve as one of the many sources you should utilize in order to conduct your research in preparation for our conference!

This background guide is filled with important statistics and subtopics that you may use in debate, and it provides delegates with a holistic understanding of both topics. In your position paper, you must include why your country thinks that these issues are important, how you have already tried to solve the problems and what possible solutions you may use to make the world a better place and minimize the problem. This background guide will help you understand the basic ideas of the issues, and it is your job to be creative and figure out different solutions. In order to aid you with your process of writing a position paper and finding solutions, we will have questions to consider at the end of every topic as well as descriptions of your position at the end of the background guide! We look forward to hearing the ideas you bring to the table! Good luck!

Our committee email is: aseanhmuncxviii@gmail.com

We are looking forward to seeing you in committee!

Sincerely,

Pyas Majumder, Eben Thomas, Armaan Hossain, Maxwell Yang



How to Write a Position Paper

We ask that you submit at least one position paper on either Topic A (Relations with China) or Topic B (Political Rights in ASEAN) to be considered for awards. Position papers should be no longer than one page in length and must have footnotes in MLA format for all sources used.

Paragraph 1:

- Quote important documents and find different statistics regarding Relations with China or Political Rights in ASEAN.
- Use the background guide to familiarize yourself with the topics and why the issues are important to your position
- Cite documents like the UN Charter or other legal documents that pertain to either topic.
- Explain why this issue is important and should be addressed.

Paragraph 2:

- Research more to find your country's policies and what they have done to address these specific issues.
- Use the position guides listed at the end of the background guide to help you.
- What laws have been passed? What is your country's stance on both topics? What countries has your country worked with in the past and what countries may it be looking to work with in the future?
- You can include quotes from your country's leader, conventions and resolutions your country has ratified, and statistics about your country to justify your position.

Paragraph 3:

- Come up with creative ideas that will help either solve or minimize this issue worldwide. How can we improve relations with China? How do we enforce fair political rights in ASEAN? What possible actions can we take?
- Remember to propose solutions relative to your country view and bloc (a bloc is a group of delegates that share similar ideas).
- At the bottom of each topic, we have added in questions to consider to help you find creative and thoughtful ideas.
- Make sure to write about what your country would like to accomplish in this committee.

Position Papers are due Monday, May 15 and must be e-mailed to:

aseanhmuncxviii@gmail.com



Committee Background

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, otherwise known as ASEAN, is an intergovernmental organization made up of Southeast Asian countries: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.¹



About ASEAN:

ASEAN is an intergovernmental organization committee that works to achieve peace, security, and stability in the Southeast Asian region. ASEAN operates on a consent-based decision-making process, meaning that all member states must agree on any policy or action taken by the organization. ASEAN holds an annual summit meeting, where the leaders of its member states discuss regional issues and set policy priorities.

How was ASEAN created?

Adam Malik, Presidium Minister for Political Affairs and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia began his exploration of the creation of an inter-government agreement between the nations of Southeast Asia along with his Malaysian and Thai counterparts. He envisioned that this organization would allow the region to be able to fight back against external threats, such as the containment of communism at that time. Many agreed with him, such as Tun Abdul Razak, deputy prime minister of Malaysia, and ASEAN was formed through hours of negotiation between member countries.² The five ministers of foreign affairs who signed the document solidifying ASEAN were from Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. They wanted common responsibility with the goal of shifting towards regional thinking rather than only over their own countries. Thanat Khoman, the Foreign Minister of Thailand, spoke of building a new society that responds to the needs of the time and advances the material and spiritual well-being of Southeast Asian peoples. The ASEAN Declaration affirmed the member states committed to the principle of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity,

¹“History - ASEAN Main Portal.” *Asean.org*, <https://asean.org/the-founding-of-asean/>. Accessed 8 May 2023

² “The Founding of ASEAN (part 2) - ASEAN Main Portal.” *Asean.org*, <https://asean.org/the-founding-of-asean/the-founding-of-asean-part-2/>. Accessed 8 May 2023.



non-interference in each other's internal affairs, peaceful settlement of disputes, and cooperation for economic and social progress.³

ASEAN History

Since its founding in 1967, ASEAN has become a significant milestone for the Southeast Asian region. Created amidst the tensions of the Cold War and regional instabilities, ASEAN has successfully achieved its goals of cooperation, as described in its motto of "One Vision, One Identity, One Community." ASEAN has transformed from a loose organization into a rules-based regional organization with a charter that has gained worldwide recognition as a dynamic regional grouping. ASEAN's agenda covers three main pillars: political security, economic, and socio-cultural, and it has made significant achievements toward regional peace, stability, and prosperity. To promote regional integration and peace, ASEAN created The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) in 1976, which outlines the progression within the interstate. In terms of economics, ASEAN also created the Trade in Goods Agreement as a legal framework for easier trading between bloc nations.⁴

ASEAN currently

ASEAN has faced numerous challenges in recent years. Since 2013, China has built military bases on islands in the South China Sea. However, this has resulted in the violations of the territorial integrity of many Asian members. To make matters worse, China has sent its warships as well as cargo vessels to further strengthen its grip in the South China Sea. Meanwhile, the situation of rising authoritarian and autocratic movements has sprung up in China. In Myanmar, a coup has resulted in the democratic government being replaced by a Junta while in the Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte has been using authoritarian measures to crack down on drug cartels and his successor Marcos J.R. will likely be no different.

³ "History - ASEAN Main Portal." *Asean.org*, <https://asean.org/the-founding-of-asean/>. Accessed 8 May 2023.

⁴ "History - ASEAN Main Portal." *Asean.org*, <https://asean.org/the-founding-of-asean/>. Accessed 8 May 2023.



Topic A: Relations With China





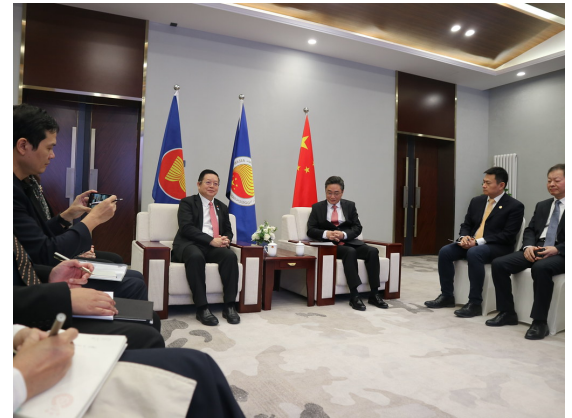
What is China's Current Relationship with ASEAN?

Introduction

As delegates, when reading this background guide it is important to understand the general question of whether or not ASEAN countries should collectively become closer to China or decide to separate themselves further. You should consider the benefits that ASEAN countries gain by interacting with China and the drawbacks that come from countries overstepping their boundaries.

China and ASEAN are interdependent. ASEAN is China's largest trading partner. As part of neighborhood diplomacy, a lot of Chinese foreign policy is directed toward ASEAN. At the 2022 Symposium on the International Situation and China's Foreign Relations, Wang Yi, the foreign minister of China, brought up 6 diplomatic tasks for 2023 regarding the creation of friendship amongst nations closest to China.⁵

Despite many positive trade outcomes between ASEAN and China during the Covid pandemic, the reputation of ASEAN was severely undermined. Additionally, the ongoing US-China conflict has politicized ASEAN and raised concerns among Southeast Asian nations. There have also been many concerns regarding Chinese interference in the South China Sea.



1. ASEAN-China political relations

ASEAN has had diplomatic relations with China since 1991, with China being accorded full dialogue partner status in 1996 meaning that China and ASEAN maintain friendly relations and cooperate as allies due to similar values.⁶ For this reason, they often create mutually beneficial policies.

Diplomatic relations between ASEAN and China

In 2003, the Joint Declaration of the Heads of State/Government on Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity was signed, solidifying their relationship as legitimate allies and dialogue partners. China established its first resident ambassador to ASEAN in 2012, and the ASEAN-China Centre was launched in 2011 to promote cooperation. In 2016 and 2018, ASEAN Member States and China commemorated the

⁵ "Wang Yi Attends and Addresses the Symposium on the International Situation and China's Foreign Relations in 2021." *Wang Yi Attends and Addresses the Symposium on the International Situation and China's Foreign Relations in 2021*, 20 Dec. 2021,

⁶ Rakhahari Chatterji, "China's Relationship with ASEAN: An Explainer," ORF Issue Brief No. 459, April 2021, Observer Research Foundation.



25th and 15th anniversaries of their dialogue relations, respectively. Political-security dialogue and cooperation are enhanced through various mechanisms, with China acceding to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (which outlines the peaceful cooperation between nations in Southeast Asia) and expressing its intention to help maintain the protocol to the Southeast Asian Nuclear Free Zone to make sure tension does not arise.

The Declaration on the Conducts of Parties in the South China Sea was signed in 2002, and the Guidelines to Implement the DOC(Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea) were adopted in 2011. The Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea and Guidelines for Hotline Communications among Senior Officials were adopted in response to maritime emergencies. The framework of the COC(code of conduct) was adopted in 2017, with negotiations aimed to be completed by 2021. Finally, cooperation in combating transnational crimes and other non-traditional security issues is done through annual consultations between ASEAN and China.⁷

Tensions Between the US and China in ASEAN Territory

Southeast Asia is one of the many locations where the US and China battle over influence.⁸ over a variety of issues, such as territorial disagreements in the South China Sea, economic guidelines, and the autonomy of Taiwan.

The most significant reflection of this tension is the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a trade agreement including 15 Asia Pacific nations with all 10 members of ASEAN, as well as Australia, Japan, South Korea, and New Zealand created by China and considered to be the most significant trade agreement in the world. Although China has exclaimed about the benefits of RCEP in terms of the region's economic development, analysts remain cautious about its potential and lack of benefits for ASEAN.⁹ The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) was created in May 2022 to combat RCEP. The IPEF aims to reaffirm U.S. economic engagement in the region and provide a Washington-led alternative to Beijing's RCEP. However, some analysts doubt whether IPEF will be able to have a

⁷*Overview of ASEAN-China Dialogue Relations - ASEAN Main Portal.*
<https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Overview-of-ASEAN-China-Relations-22-Apr-2020-00000002.pdf>.

⁸ Scott, Liam, and Peh Hong Lim. "US-China Rivalry Increases Tension in Southeast Asia." *VOA*, Voice of America (VOA News), 4 Jan. 2023, <https://www.voanews.com/a/us-china-rivalry-increases-tension-in-southeast-asia/6893464.html>.

⁹ Sisingamangaraja, Jalan. "Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement to Enter into Force on 1 January 2022." *RCEP*, <https://rcepsec.org/>.



significant impact on Southeast Asia's economic dependence on China in the short term, given its loose requirements and lack of strict commitments.¹⁰

Some ASEAN members have expressed concern over Taiwan, especially when U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited in August 2022. When China was formed in 1949 following the Communist victory in the Chinese civil war, Nationalists retained control over Taiwan as well as their seat in the United Nations as the Republic of China until 1975.¹¹ When the US normalized relations with China, they agreed to respect the “One China Policy” which does not acknowledge Taiwan as a sovereign state. Regardless, for over 70 years, Taiwan has functioned independently with US support and become an advanced economy based on its production of advanced technology. In recent years, China's militarization of the South China Sea and Washington's escalating efforts to block China's access to advanced semiconductor chips are also contributing to tensions in the region.

Southeast Asia remains caught in the middle of this rivalry, regarding economics and security. While it is uncertain when this will end, ASEAN will have to create a united policy in its relationship with both countries.

2. Territorial Disputes between China and ASEAN

South China Sea Dispute:

China claims sovereignty over the South China Sea, which is rich in natural resources and also claimed by Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam. The United States opposes China's territorial claims in the sea and supports freedom of navigation. The Hague Tribunal ruled in favor of the Philippines' claims under UNCLOS, but China rejected the ruling. China has been reclaiming land, building on existing reefs, and constructing military installations on new islands in the sea. To challenge China's assertive presence, the United States conducts FONOPs (Freedom of Navigation Operations) and supports Southeast Asian partners. The dispute threatens sea lines of communication that are important for trade and naval movements. With a defense treaty with the Philippines, the United States



¹⁰ “Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF).” *United States Trade Representative*, <https://ustr.gov/trade-agreements/agreements-under-negotiation/indo-pacific-economic-framework-prosperity-ipef>.

¹¹ Rising, David. “China's Response to Pelosi Visit a Sign of Future Intentions.” *AP NEWS*, Associated Press, 19 Aug. 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/taiwan-china-beijing-congress-8857910a1e44cefa70bc4dfd184ef880>.



could be drawn into a potential conflict with China. Although recent tensions between China and the Philippines and Vietnam have cooled, China continues to build military and industrial outposts.

In an effort to strengthen its capabilities for maritime security and deter Chinese aggression, Japan has also sold ships and military hardware to the Philippines and Vietnam. Territorial disputes, however, continue to be potential flashpoints for military escalation, and the United States must help prevent such scenarios by assisting diplomatic efforts to settle differences. The international law governing maritime disputes could be undermined and the development of destabilizing weapons facilitated if disagreements are not resolved diplomatically. Despite the fact that China continues to construct military and industrial outposts on man-made islands in disputed waters, recent events seem to indicate that tensions between China, the Philippines, and Vietnam have decreased. The importance of FONOPs was emphasized by President Donald J. Trump during his 2017 visit to Southeast Asia. Through FONOPs, the United States has also increased its military activity and naval presence in the region. The US has carried out six FONOPs at sea in southern China as of May 2017.¹²

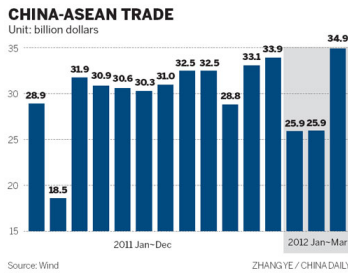
Malaysia-China Maritime Dispute: The Malaysia-China Maritime Dispute is not a recent conflict, it has been a long-standing issue over reefs, and shoals in the South China Sea region. Mainly the dispute builds around the Spratly Islands, which are claimed as national territory by several countries in the Southeast Asian region, including Malaysia and China. While China claims most of the South China Sea, specially Spratly Island, because of its historical value, Malaysia on the contrary, wants to partially own the surrounding water body based on its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) as Malaysia was influenced by the United States Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)¹³. Following the issue, when Beijing is trying to legitimize and defend its claim, Malaysia is one of the countries to modernize its naval and coast guard capabilities to preserve the status quo in the SCS.¹⁴ Malaysia-China is an example of China's ambitious approach to acquire geopolitical significance.

3. China's Economic Relationship with ASEAN

¹² Center for Preventative Action. "Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea | Global Conflict Tracker." *Council on Foreign Relations*, 4 May 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/territorial-disputes-south-china-sea>. Accessed 7 May 2023.

¹³ "Malaysia-China Relations." *Malaysia-China Relations – The Diplomat*, <https://thediplomat.com/tag/malaysia-china-relations/>.

¹⁴ *Military Build-up in the South China Sea - Rand Corporation*. https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/external_publications/EP60000/EP68058/RAND_EP68058.pdf.



China has been ASEAN's biggest trading partner for the past 12 years. In 2021, their trade totaled \$310 billion. In this trading system, China's investment reached 14\$ billion and ASEAN's investment led to 5.6\$ billion. They both participate in a free trade agreement inside the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area. Usually a free trade zone entails less tax between imports and exports. Most of ASEAN's exports to China include electronics and fuels which make up much of China's export

products. This free trade zone has been the center of foreign direct investment into ASEAN.¹⁵ Through the Trade in Goods agreement made in 2005, the average exports from ASEAN to China increased by approximately 10% over the next decade. Both parties of the agreement tried to invest in emerging markets such as the digital economy, manufacturing, and the green economy.¹⁶ Overall, China acts as a potential trade partner for ASEAN, meaning that ASEAN can benefit from controlled foreign investment into emerging markets in China. However, currently, countries' economies are semi-reliant on these investments.¹⁷



Chinese BRI (Belt and Road Initiative) and ASEAN

The biggest example of Chinese initiatives globally is the BRI (Belt and Road Initiative), the 2013 cornerstone of China's President Xi Jinping's foreign policy of investing in infrastructure in over 150 countries. President XI hopes that by giving out loans to other countries, these countries will come under China's sphere of influence.

All ASEAN member states are part of the Belt and Road Initiative. Although the BRI projects have played an important role in helping ASEAN member states grow their economies. One example is the Chinese-Laos railway which was funded by China and had begun construction in 2021. This project aims to increase national connectivity which in turn increases the amount of available jobs.¹⁸ It cost about \$5.9 billion with the majority of it being invested in by China.¹⁹

¹⁵ "China Free Trade Area: Free Trade Areas: ASEAN Investment." *ASEAN*, <https://investasean.asean.org/free-trade-areas/view/734/newsid/776/aseanchina-free-trade-area>.
¹⁶ Huang, Xilian. *Overview Of China-ASEAN Economic And Trade Relations, Opportunities, And Challenges*
¹⁷ "ASEAN-China Economic Relation - ASEAN Main Portal." *Asean.org*, <https://asean.org/our-communities/economic-community/integration-with-global-economy/asean-china-economic-relation/>. Accessed 2 May 2023
¹⁸ "Officials, experts: ASEAN's economic development benefits from BRI projects." *State Council Information Office*, 10 November 2022, http://english.scio.gov.cn/beltandroad/2022-11/10/content_78512128.htm. Accessed 2 May 2023.
¹⁹ "Officials, experts: ASEAN's economic development benefits from BRI projects." *State Council Information Office*, 10 November 2022, http://english.scio.gov.cn/beltandroad/2022-11/10/content_78512128.htm. Accessed 2 May 2023.



Many countries have fallen into debt traps with China. Cambodia has 41% of its external debt owed to China because of the Belt and Road initiative.

As China interacts with more economically vulnerable states, it increases its dependency. For now, none of the ASEAN countries are fully reliant on Chinese investment but that is still subject to change as China continues to pour money into the bloc. So far, Chinese investments have been thought to be unfair against ASEAN. For example, loans are usually debt-financed, meaning that the loan amount is returned at a specific date with interest. Compared to World Bank loans, Chinese lenders have made higher interest rates in the ASEAN region. For now, China has not had any issues regarding unfair loans specifically to the Southeast region but have definitely not been a benevolent partner.²⁰

Chinese Firms in South East Asia

In recent years, Chinese firms have moved into ASEAN member states such as Vietnam, the Philippines, and Indonesia for cheaper labor and access to raw materials including nickel. Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam have some of the largest nickel reserves in the world. Indonesia alone has 40% of the world's nickel production output.²¹ Although Chinese firms have intentions of moving there to make a profit, they are also hurting competition with local companies in the region.

Trade deficit with China

China is the largest trading partner for many ASEAN member states. Trade between China and ASEAN doubled from 235.5 billion dollars in 2010 to 507.9 billion in 2019. However, the trade deficit between the two increased from 10.50 billion dollars to 102.9 billion dollars in 2019.²² This highlights the overdependence that ASEAN member states have on China. ASEAN has been looking to other countries such as Japan, the United States, and India to diversify its trade. ²³The problem with being dependent on a single country for trade is that said-single country will have economic leverage over the other country and

²⁰ Cheong, Darren. "2022/88 'Chinese 'Debt Traps' in Southeast Asia: What the Data Say' by Darren Cheong - Iseas-Yusof Ishak Institute." *ISEAS*, 8 Sept. 2022, <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/articles-commentaries/iseas-perspective/2022-88-chinese-debt-traps-in-southeast-asia-what-the-data-say-by-darren-cheong/>.

²¹Tone, Sixth. "Can Chinese Companies Make It in Southeast Asia?" *#SixthTone*, 18 Nov. 2020, <https://www.sixthtone.com/news/1006458>.

²² Asean. "ASEAN-CHINA ECONOMIC Relations." *ASEAN*, asean.org/our-communities/economic-community/integration-with-global-economy/ASEAN-china-economic-relation/. Accessed 7 May 2023.

²³ 2021/111 "The Role of Export Diversification in ASEAN's Trade with China" by Phi Minh Hong. ISEAS, 2021, www.iseas.edu.sg/articles-commentaries/iseas-perspective/2021-111-the-role-of-export-diversification-in-aseans-trade-with-china-by-phi-minh-hong/. Accessed 7 May 2023.



will use that to influence that country for economic gain. China has been using its economic influence on other countries to influence their policies.

4. China and ASEAN and Human Rights

China is a nation plagued with human rights violations. However, due to the nature of a communist state, they have a lot of power as they can conceal information of any injustice they may perform as well as remove reforms by external organizations that the government may pose as a threat. For this reason, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly what violations the Chinese government may do. However, given the information that is public, China has committed many threats to human rights in many aspects. Some of the major violations of Human rights in China include Access to healthcare, Freedom of Expression, and Ethnic-Based oppression.²⁴ These violations impact ties between ASEAN and China as many of the ASEAN members have condemned their actions. However in other cases, ASEAN countries are following the Chinese example in terms of Human Rights.

Covid-19's Effect on Healthcare and Access to Food in China

At the height of the pandemic, China imposed several restrictions that were so harsh that they threatened access to medical assistance and food. The “zero-Covid policy”, which aimed to completely remove Covid in China, consisted of lockdowns and mandatory quarantine. If someone tested positive for



Covid-19, they were sent to quarantine facilities which were unhygienic. They would also of separating parents from their children. China recently dismantled the regulations aimed to combat Covid-19 on January 8, 2023.²⁵

²⁴ Amnesty International. Human Rights in China. 2022. Amnesty International, Amnesty International, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/east-asia/china/report-china/>. Accessed May 1 2023.

²⁵ Amnesty International. Human Rights in China. 2022. Amnesty International, Amnesty International, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/east-asia/china/report-china/>. Accessed May 1 2023.



Freedom of Expression

The Chinese government is known for censorship, specifically in the media. When China hosted the Winter Olympics, they failed to assure foreign press that they would receive media freedom during the games. They warned athletes not to speak of anything against Chinese laws and regulations. Many Journalists argued that the government repeatedly interfered with the coverage of the games.

They suppress political groups who do not support the ideologies of the Chinese government. The commemoration of the victims of the crackdown on the pro-democracy demonstrations in 1989 remains prohibited in all forms. Apparently, this included an ice cream sculpture in the shape of a tank on a well-known influencer's live stream which was taken down on the eve of the 4 June anniversary of the military crackdown on demonstrators in Tiananmen Square.²⁶

Oppression of Ethnic Minorities

The Chinese government is accused of oppressing Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities. The Chinese government has denied these allegations and justifies its actions as necessary for combating terrorism in the region. The government is accused of detaining Uyghurs in internment camps, where they use indoctrination, forced labor, and other abuses in these camps as forms of forced assimilation. The Chinese government has also been accused of attempting to ethnically cleanse Uyghur women as a part of their effort to decrease the population.



Since their invasion of Tibet in 1959, the Chinese government has been accused of suppressing Tibetan culture, restricting their freedom of expression, and cracking down on peaceful protests. The international community, including many human rights organizations and governments, has been calling for accountability and action from the Chinese government to address these human rights violations.

ASEAN Human Rights Violations

Due to the ethnic diversity and varying political structures with ASEAN, addressing issues of human rights remains a major hurdle. While some countries have made progress, others have struggled to move forward. For example, the Philippines has worsened its human rights crisis with its "war on drugs."

²⁶ Amnesty International. Human Rights in China. 2022. Amnesty International, Amnesty International, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/east-asia/china/report-china/>. Accessed May 1 2023.



According to a human rights research group, the Filipino police falsify evidence to justify their killings. This resulted in the deaths of 12,000 people and received international condemnation.²⁷

Oppression of Human rights defenders

In Thailand, more than 30 human rights defenders and civil society activists have been killed since 2001, and their cases remain largely unsolved. Despite the government's promise to create measures to protect human rights defenders, they continue to face threats and attacks. Defamation lawsuits are frequently used to silence individuals who report on human rights violations, as seen in the case of Sirikan Charoensiri of Thai Lawyers for Human Rights, who was charged with sedition (speech of rebellion against a state or monarchy) for reporting violations and would face imprisonment if found guilty.

Myanmarese human rights defenders are often threatened with arrest and murder due to the country's corrupt judicial practices and weak law enforcement. A human rights defender who was sentenced to three months in prison for broadcasting a satirical play regarding an armed conflict on Facebook is an example of what they could expect for expressing what they believe.²⁸

5. Environmental disagreements between ASEAN member states and Chinese violation of environmental law

Environmental disagreements between ASEAN member states and China have been a source of tension in recent years. These disagreements are primarily related to China's growing economic influence in the region, which has led to an increase in pollution, overfishing, and other environmental problems.



Case Study: Mekong River Dam

The construction of the Mekong River Dam caused environmental damage to the South East Asian region (specifically Laos and Cambodia). China has built several large dams on the upper reaches of the river, whereas Laos has built several dams on the lower Mekong. These dams have disrupted the natural flow of the river, which has had significant environmental and social impacts. The dams reduce fish

²⁷ “Philippines' 'War on Drugs'.” *Philippines' 'War on Drugs'* | *Human Rights Watch*, 2 Mar. 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/tag/philippines-war-drugs>.

²⁸ Farhan, Ahmad. “The Sad Case of Human Rights in ASEAN.” *The ASEAN Post*, 21 Apr. 2019, <https://theaseanpost.com/article/sad-case-human-rights-asean>.



populations and impact the livelihoods of local communities that depend on fishing. The dams have disrupted the river's natural flow, which has resulted in decreased fish populations, soil erosion, and other environmental problems. The dam was sponsored by China under the Mekong River Commission, as China's main route to create a hydroelectric energy source.²⁹

The construction of the dam has caused irreparable damage displacing local communities and disrupting their traditional ways of life.³⁰ Many people who live along the river have been forced to relocate, and their access to natural resources like fish and forest products has been significantly reduced.

To address these environmental and social challenges, the Mekong River Commission was established in 1995 by Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam. The commission is responsible for promoting cooperation and sustainable development in the Mekong Basin and has played an important role in mitigating the impacts of hydropower development on the river³¹.

Air pollution

The rapid expansion of industries, mills, and factories has had serious health and environmental impacts on neighboring countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. The transnational (across different countries) nature of air pollution implies that it can negatively affect entire regions. ASEAN member states should address this issue through regional cooperation and environmental agreements.³²

South China Sea dispute Impact on the Environment

The South China Sea is a major source of fish, oil, and natural gas, and is also home to a rich variety of marine life. However, China's aggressive territorial claims in the region have led to overfishing and environmental degradation³³, which have impacted the livelihoods of local fishermen and the health of the

²⁹“Hydropower.” *Mekong River Commission (MRC)*, <https://www.mrcmekong.org/our-work/topics/hydropower/>.

³⁰ “Human Rights in Myanmar.” *Amnesty International*,

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/south-east-asia-and-the-pacific/myanmar/report-myanmar/>.

³¹ “Hydropower.” *Mekong River Commission*, <https://www.mrcmekong.org/our-work/topics/hydropower/>. Accessed 2 May 2023.

³² “Air Pollution Takes a Bite out of Asia's Grain Crops.” *Nature News*, 21 Jan. 2022, www.nature.com/articles/d41586-022-00117-3.

³³ “The South China Sea Dispute: Opportunities for ASEAN to enhance its policies in order to achieve resolution.” *Naval Academy*, https://www.usna.edu/NAFAC/_files/round_tables/white/Rustandi_IPSP.pdf. Accessed 2 May 2023.



marine ecosystem.³⁴ Several ASEAN member states, including the Philippines and Vietnam, have disputed China's claims and sought to protect their fishing rights and marine resources³⁵.

Questions to Consider

1. What should ASEAN's stance be on China regarding the economic and political influence it has over ASEAN?
2. Should China be trusted with ASEAN despite recent territorial disputes such as the South China Sea?
3. What compromises can be made between China and ASEAN that strengthen their relationship?
4. How can reforms in human rights be made in China while also discussing compromise between China and ASEAN

Possible Solutions

1. Create a compromise regarding concerns about China's decisions on matters

1. **Sanction China in protest of China's human rights violations in Xinjiang and China**
2. **State possible propositions for the betterment of the Chinese domestic dispute.**
3. **Cooperate with the United States, Australia, and other Western powers to protect territorial sea sovereignty in the South China Sea**
4. **Create equal distribution of foreign investments from China amongst ASEAN nations**
5. **Create a law where China is required not to have its companies take personal information from citizens of ASEAN Member States**

Helpful Links:

- <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/asia-and-the-pacific/east-asia/china/report-china/>
- <https://thediplomat.com/2023/01/will-china-asean-relations-take-a-turn-for-the-better-post-pandemic/#:~:text=In%20terms%20of%20geographical%20proximity,States%20and%20the%20European%20Union.>
- <https://asean.org/our-communities/economic-community/integration-with-global-economy/asean-china-economic-relation/>
- <https://asean.org/our-communities/economic-community/integration-with-global-economy/asean-china-economic-relation/>

³⁴“Managing Territorial Disputes in Southeast Asia: Is There More than the South China Sea?”, in: *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, “Managing Territorial Disputes in Southeast Asia: Is There More than the South China Sea?”, in: *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 29 July 2022, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/186810341703600302>. Accessed 2 May 2023.

³⁵Goh, Evelyn. “Great Powers and Hierarchical Order in Southeast Asia: Analyzing Regional Security Strategies.” *International Security*, vol. 32, no. 3, 2007, pp. 113–57. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30130520>. Accessed 2 May 2023.



- https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/ziliao_665539/3602_665543/3604_665547/200011/t20001117_697858.html
- <http://fta.mofcom.gov.cn/topic/chinaasean.shtml>



Topic B: Political Rights in ASEAN Territories





What are Political Rights?

Political rights involve how much or how little a person can participate in the politics of their society. In other words, it describes how much a person has a say in their government. This is closely related to citizenship status and can be hindered by discrimination and/or repression. Some basic political rights include the right to join a political party, the right to run for office, and the ability to freely assemble, meaning that a person can join political rallies, events, or protests.³⁶

However, this is different from civil rights which are rights that protect people's freedom from government oppression. The main differences revolve around how political rights allow people to participate in government while civil rights protect an individual's freedom.³⁷

1. What is the Stance of ASEAN countries on Political Rights

Before we analyze the current situation of Political Rights within ASEAN, we must analyze the stance that was created by ASEAN. In the Human Rights Declaration that was created by ASEAN, they included a subsection regarding Political and Civil Right to encourage all ASEAN countries to improve their human rights protections

The ASEAN Human Rights Declaration protects the rights to life, personal liberty and security, freedom of movement, and property ownership. It also ensures the right to a nationality, and a fair trial. The ASEAN Human Rights Declaration also promotes the rights to freedom of expression, conscience, opinion, religion, and peaceful assembly. However many ASEAN members often violate the declaration.³⁸

2. Freedom of Expression

Despite ASEAN's push for transparency regarding freedom of expression as stated in the ASEAN Declaration of Human Rights, ASEAN countries do not reinforce these rights for their citizens. In fact, in every country in ASEAN, there is some form of oppression of individual thought and opinion regarding the government. This may vary from Government Media Censorship to the suppression of independent journalism to extreme extents.

³⁶"Citizenship and Political Rights." *CSCE*, <https://www.csce.gov/issue/citizenship-and-political-rights>

³⁷"Milestone Documents." *National Archives and Records Administration*, National Archives and Records Administration, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/list>.

³⁸"ASEAN Human Rights Declaration - ASEAN Main Portal." *Asean.org*, 19 November 2012, <https://asean.org/asean-human-rights-declaration/>. Accessed 8 May 2023.



Protection of journalists and whistleblowers

Many ASEAN nations have strict laws against journalists and people who criticize the current government. Government-created, sophisticated social media operations have damaged the reputations of several journalists. Defamation offenses and other offenses with ambiguous wording have been used to imprison journalists. In order to maintain peace, the majority of Southeast Asian nations have given up their right to free speech in favor of stability. These nations now attempt to filter information by adopting Chinese government techniques. As all 10 ASEAN members are ranked in the bottom third of Reporters Without Borders' annual ranking of 180 nations for press freedom, no member state appears to have more press freedom than any other.

Facebook and other social media sites have turned into venues of hatred for activists and journalists across Southeast Asia due to the proliferation of social media and easy access to affordable cell phones. For instance, since the country's reunification, the Communist Party of Vietnam has maintained authoritarian control over the right to free speech. Since citizen journalists and bloggers run the risk of going to jail for disseminating news, there are no independent media outlets. As of 2018, Vietnam is ranked 175th out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index. With 24 activists found guilty in the year before 2017, 41 arrests since May 2018, and more than 140 political prisoners, it was by far one of the worst years. The crackdown in Vietnam coincides with increased worldwide attention. Force 47, a cyber unit, was established to stifle online dissent.³⁹

Censorship and Internet regulation

Most Southeast Asian nations saw a decrease in press freedoms in 2020 and the beginning of 2021, especially online, where the majority of information is consumed. Because of critical content they have posted or shared on social media sites, journalists in Southeast Asia are increasingly being persecuted. This tendency is reflected in the Freedom on the Net index, which rates a nation's internet freedom, with the majority of Southeast Asian nations receiving low scores. In Southeast Asia, social media is an important source of news, with a sizable portion of the population relying on it for news consumption, especially through mobile devices.



³⁹ Quackenbush, Casey, et al. "Inside the Fight to Save Press Freedom in Southeast Asia." *TIME*, TIME, 21 June 2018, <https://time.com/longform/press-freedom-southeast-asia/>. Accessed 3 May 2023.



Press freedoms in the region have not increased, despite the growth of social media and the internet. Southeast Asian countries, with the exception of Timor Leste, did not rank among the top 100 in Reporters Without Borders' 2021 World Press Freedom Index. Due to authoritarian heavy-handed censorship practices, persecution of journalists and independent media organizations, and monopolies on mainstream local media, press freedom rankings in several Southeast Asian countries are low. Southeast Asia has punished journalists and silenced alternative voices through enforcing existing legal frameworks, including as penal codes, national security-related laws, technology laws, anti-fake news laws, and COVID-19 interim measures.

In nations like Cambodia, Myanmar, the Philippines, and Thailand, journalists who report critically risk losing their jobs and sometimes even their lives due to significant penalties from the government. Governments and officials have taken advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic to repress journalists and independent media organizations. In some countries, such as Indonesia and Myanmar, where journalists have been penalized under rules governing electronic information and transactions, regulations relating to technology have also been used to restrict their ability to do their jobs. Press freedoms in Southeast Asia have declined as a result of the adoption of ambiguously worded fake news regulations and politically motivated government crackdowns on critics.⁴⁰

Hate speech and incitement to violence

The use of law and social segregation policies to manage diverse communities began in Southeast Asia when traditional communities began migrating there in large numbers for a variety of reasons. There are four main categories of hate speech in the area: speech directed at foreigners, immigrants, refugees, migrant workers, political ideologies, and sexual minorities. Due to the fact that many hate groups frequently target minorities on social media, this hate speech has made its way there.⁴¹

3. Right to Vote and Participate in Government

Electoral Systems and voter suppression 2022 was a year of democratic regression in Southeast Asia, with most countries in the region experiencing setbacks in democracy.⁴²

⁴⁰ Strangio, Sebastian. "The State of Press Freedom in Southeast Asia." – *The Diplomat*, 4 May 2023, thediplomat.com/2023/05/the-state-of-press-freedom-in-southeast-asia/.

⁴¹ *The Report on "Hate Speech in Southeast Asia: New Forms, Old Rules ..."* <https://www.thaimediafund.or.th/en/the-report-on-hate-speech-in-southeast-asia-new-forms-old-rules/>.

⁴² "Why Democracy in Southeast Asia Will Worsen in 2023." *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/why-democracy-southeast-asia-will-worsen-2023>.



Myanmar remains under the control of the junta (a country ruled by a militant group), which is currently engaged in rising brutality. Their disregard for global opinion has led them to imprison a former UK ambassador, execute activists, and give a long prison sentence to democratically elected Burmese Politician Aung San Suu Kyi.

The Philippine government cracked down on the media under President Rodrigo Duterte, who completed his term in June 2022.

Thailand currently has a pro-military parliamentary coalition) in power due to a 2019 rigged election. It is what's led to the removal of opposition parties as well as militaristic and allied interference in the judicial system. The Thai king also involves himself in politics and business which has raised concerns that it could revert back to an absolute monarchy.

In Cambodia, the government cracks down on activists, and Hun Sen, the prime minister of Cambodia, continues to suppress the free press and civil society as he leans towards installing his son as his successor.

Indonesia's President Joko Widodo has been criticized for increasing his military power while removing rights for minorities. In 2023, Indonesia's Defense Minister Prabowo Subianto, who has a history of removing rights, is expected to run for president and could further erode democracy if elected.

Philippines' new president Ferdinand Marcos Jr is expected to continue Duterte's crackdown on media and civil society.

Thailand and Malaysia are also holding general elections in 2023, with concerns about fairness and potential manipulation by pro-military parties. Meanwhile Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos, are also experiencing authoritarian trends. Myanmar's conflict is expected to continue with uncertainty about the future of the country. This is a pattern followed by a lot of ASEAN countries as many hold elections but they are often rigged in favor of the incumbent ruling party. To address the trend of countries becoming more authoritarian, ASEAN can address the issue by implementing policies that will ensure democracy to remain in the member states while also preventing countries from becoming more authoritarian.

Women and minority representation in government

Despite many setbacks regarding political rights, the representation of Women in ASEAN countries is quite significant. Achieving gender parity in parliaments and government is crucial for women's perspectives to be reflected in public decision-making. ASEAN countries have committed to



achieving women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of public decision-making through the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁴³.

At the same time, Women's political representation in ASEAN countries has not increased over the past decade, with women filling around one-tenth of ministerial positions and one-fifth of seats in parliament on average. Comprehensive measures are needed to enhance women's full participation in political leadership, including tackling patriarchal attitudes and cultural norms, mentoring schemes, media training, and financial support for campaigns, and implementing quotas and accountability mechanisms.



Women's parliamentary representation in ASEAN countries increased by 1.7 p.p. from 2008 to 2018, with notable increases in the Philippines and Indonesia and declines in Singapore and Thailand. Female representation in parliament ranges from 30% in the Philippines to 5% in Thailand. Quotas alone are not enough, and countries with quotas have seen varying levels of change in women's representation over the past decade. Most ASEAN countries have only 10% of ministerial posts filled by women, with Indonesia and the Philippines being the exceptions. No ASEAN or OECD country has legislated gender quotas for executive appointments, Ethnic and religious minorities are often underrepresented in ASEAN countries. Southeast Asia is incredibly diverse in terms of religion, language, ethnicity, and culture, which poses complex challenges and opportunities for social policy.

For example, in Indonesia ethnicity translates into inequality in political, economic, and social life as being the majority Javanese and Muslim gives privilege in the Indonesian political system, making it difficult for other groups to be represented⁴⁴. We also see this in the Philippines as minorities in the Philippines are underrepresented in politics and are often overlooked by government organizations and politicians. An example of this is The Presidential Assistant on National Minorities (PANAMIN) agency, which is in charge of the socioeconomic development and protection of the rights of the country's

⁴³ "Women in Politics Government at a Glance Southeast Asia" 2019 OECD ILibrary, <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/a2422862-en/index>.

⁴⁴S-P-A-Administrator. "Ethnicity and Inequality in Southeast Asia." Social Policy Association, 2 Nov. 2021, <https://social-policy.org.uk/spa-blog/ethnicity-and-inequality-in-southeast-asia/>.



non-Muslim ethnic minorities, has engaged in repressive activities against cultural minorities in the Philippines. Ethnic minorities did not significantly profit from PANAMIN "development" projects launched on their behalf. Instead, PANAMIN enabled state and corporate interests to seize their ancestral lands. When the Office of Muslim Affairs and Cultural Communities OMAGC took over from PANAMIN in 1984, it did so to the harm of Muslim and non-Muslim minorities by maintaining the same policies, programs, tactics, and activities. The policies of PANAMIN remain largely governed by ethnic minority policy in the Philippines, notwithstanding constitutional and administrative changes.⁴⁵

Peaceful protests and demonstrations

According to the ASEAN Human Rights declarations, every person has the right to assembly. However, this right is not upheld by most ASEAN countries.

Specifically, the state of Myanmar, which had a coup in 2021 overthrowing the democratically elected government. In response to the coup, many people took to the streets to protest the new Junta. While there was rioting taking place in some of the cities, most of the demonstrations were peaceful. However, these peaceful demonstrations were followed by a brutal crackdown by the Myanmar junta. According to the U.N Human Rights Office, 8800 people were thrown in prison while 1500 people were killed by the Myanmar Security forces for protesting against the government. Furthermore, 200 of the protestors that were in jail died in custody.

Civil society organizations and NGO regulations

According to Article 16 of the ASEAN charter, ASEAN can work with organizations that support the principles of the ASEAN charter. In other words if a Civil Society Organization (CSO) supports the policies of the ASEAN charter, then they can work with ASEAN.⁴⁶ The CSO or Civil society organizations work as negotiators between public authorities and citizens through a democratic process and refers to all kinds of social action carried out by individuals or groups who are either disconnected or not managed by the state authorities.⁴⁷ Even Article 11 of the Treaty of European Union pointed out the necessity for having open, deliberate, and transparent CSO organizations to maintain a democratic system.⁴⁸ ASEAN is working with a total

⁴⁵ Okamura, Jonathan Y. "The Politics of Neglect: Philippine Ethnic Minority Policy." *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, vol. 16, no. 2, 1988, pp. 17–46. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24491107>. Accessed 5 May 2023.

⁴⁶The ASEAN Charter - Asean Main Portal. <https://www.asean.org/wp-content/uploads/images/2013/resources/publication/2012>

⁴⁷ Georgia Statement -- Rule of Law -- Sixth Committee (Legal) — 71st Session. https://www.un.org/en/ga/sixth/71/pdfs/statements/rule_of_law/georgia.pdf.

⁴⁸ "Civil Society Organisation." EUR, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/glossary/civil-society-organisation>.



of 11 CSO organizations. These organizations mostly work in the Philippines and Myanmar. One of the CSO organizations that is very prominent in the ASEAN region is Asian NGO Network on National Human Rights Institutions (ANNI)- incorporated to help establish and develop accountable, independent, and effective human rights institutions in Asia which reflects the success of an ideological CSO organization.⁴⁹

Judicial Independence and Accountability in ASEAN:

The Asia Foundation supports legal aid programs in Indonesia that provide justice to people and promote judicial independence and accountability. Working class people often lack the funds to start a business. Legal aid ensures justice to marginalized communities and individuals. This helps in promoting judicial independence and accountability in ASEAN countries.⁵⁰

The UNDP recognized the need for peaceful, right, and inclusive societies to provide justice in the SDGs as part of alleviating poverty from the grassroots level around the different parts of the world.⁵¹ The United Nations has taken initiatives to promote advocacy and guidelines to increase the accessibility of legal aid.



Besides, legal aid can be an essential side of a fair, humane, and efficient criminal justice system. Providing legal aid can ensure that people have the access to proper information regarding their own rights and entitlements.. Indonesia has identified issues among millions of Indonesians who belong to poor and marginalized communities and live without full protection of law. Since the launch of a nationally funded legal aid system in 2013, There are 310 organizations that are accredited to deliver legal aid to poor Indonesia to secure their access to justice. The legal aid is largely supported by the State budget.

⁴⁹ “Asian NGO Network on National Human Rights Institutions: UIA Yearbook Profile.” *Asian NGO Network on National Human Rights Institutions | UIA Yearbook Profile | Union of International Associations*, <https://uia.org/s/or/en/1122278636>.

⁵⁰ Wp Admin. “Photo Blog: Legal Aid Delivers Justice in Indonesia.” *The Asia Foundation*, 3 Apr. 2016, <https://asiafoundation.org/2014/05/07/photo-blog-legal-aid-delivers-justice-in-indonesia>

⁵¹ *Global Study on Legal Aid - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*. https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/LegalAid/Global-Study-on-Legal-Aid_Report01.pdf.

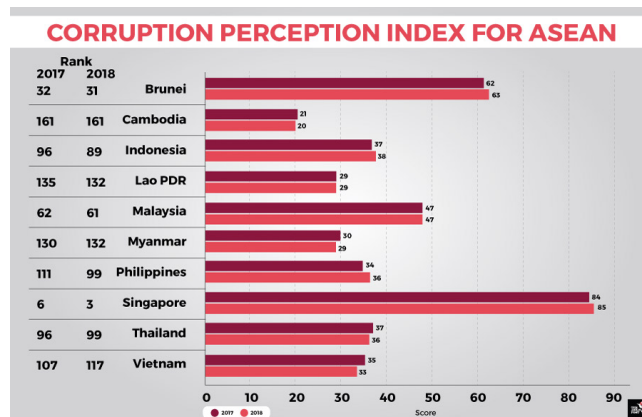


Corruption and Anti-Corruption Measures in ASEAN:

This chart provides insights on the corruption frameworks in ASEAN countries and highlights the need for strengthening anti-corruption measures.

Corruption(Social, Political, and Economic phenomenon that undermines democratic institutions, attacks government stability, and decreases economic development.)⁵² is prevalent in almost all ASEAN countries and poses a significant hindrance to political stability and economic growth as well as undermining the legitimacy of government institutions.⁵³

The Regional Anti-Corruption Conference for Law Enforcement Professionals in Southeast Asia, held in 2022, had addressed its emphasis on the United Nations General Assembly Special Session against Corruption, which, in its political declaration called on for effectuate commitment to address challenge and implementation of measures to prevent and combat corruption and strengthen international cooperation. Throughout the convention, two working groups had made their resolutions.⁵⁴ The first working group mainly focused on Strengthening regional and international cooperation for investigating and prosecuting multi-jurisdictional corruption cases to enhance cooperation among FIUs(Financial Intelligence Unit). One of the proposed resolutions was the organization of regional networking meetings in order to facilitate contacts, share experiences and build trust to improve collection and sharing of information that may support corruption investigation in South Asian countries. Similarly the working group 2 worked on addressing the link between corruption and other crimes and one of the including measures was incorporating measures to prevent and detect corruption, as appropriate, into strategies and mechanisms to counter crime and trafficking of illegal goods, including policies, procedures and training. Eventually, highlighting the importance of close cooperation to combat and eradicate corruption, specifically from the law enforcement perspective, was a major effective resolution that was adopted by the United Nation General Assembly.⁵⁵



⁵²“Corruption.” *United Nations : UNODC ROMENA*, <https://www.unodc.org/romena/en/corruption.html>.

⁵³ *Judicial Independence in East Asia: Implications for China*.

https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1172&context=public_law_and_legal_theory.

⁵⁴ https://www.unodc.org/roseap/uploads/documents/topics/anti-corruption/2022/Bangkok_Recommendations_-_Final.pdf

⁵⁵ “Documents.” *United Nations*, www.un.org/en/our-work/documents. Accessed 8 May 2023.



Questions to Consider

- How should ASEAN address the Myanmar protest crackdown?
- What actions should ASEAN take to achieve political equality for women and minorities in all of its member states?
- Should ASEAN push for democracy in areas with more autocratic governments?
- What actions should ASEAN members take to address internal and external corruption?
- What can governments do to protect journalists' rights?

Helpful Links

- asean.org
- <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/myanmar-history-coup-military-rule-ethnic-conflict-rohingya>
- <https://accountablejournalism.org/ethics-codes/International-ASEAN>
- <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/promoting-electoral-integrity-in-southeast-asia.pdf>
- <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/231237/2021-03-19%20The%20state%20of%20human%20rights%20and%20democracy%20in%20the%20ASEAN%20region.pdf>
- <https://asean.org/our-communities/asean-political-security-community/rules-based-people-oriented-people-centred/human-rights/>
- <https://asean.org/asean-human-rights-declaration/>



Country Positions

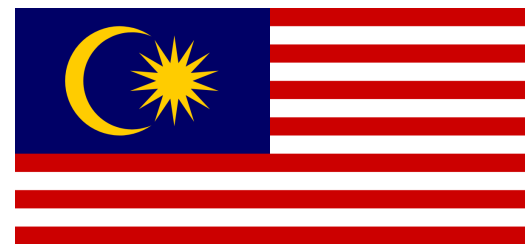
Description of How Positions Work:

If you are in ASEAN you are in what is called a co-delegation(2 people representing a country). One of you will be a Minister of Defence and one will be the Minister of Foreign Affairs. You will both write separate position papers using the perspective of your assigned roles, however, you will work together in a committee. If you are in an Observer state, you are in a single delegation. You will write your position paper on the country's stance with ASEAN on the matters. Remember that even though you are not in ASEAN, you are quite influential in the region. Also please make sure you remain in the position based on who you are representing as this will help you in committee. Reading other backgrounds is useful for finding out who you will most likely work with in committee.



Malaysia

According to a 2014 survey, it showed that 66 percent of Malaysians were concerned about the territorial disputes in the South China Sea. However, Malaysia will continue to not back down from Chinese opposition who claim to be the sole possessor of the South China Sea and want to be able to trade freely while maintaining their own territory and sovereignty. The South China Sea is an integral part of the Malaysian economy as state-owned energy company Petronas uses the sea for energy projects such as the operations of oil and gas fields(places in the ocean where oil is found). It also facilitates over 3 trillion dollars of trade by Sea. However Malaysia, like many other ASEAN members, enjoys the benefits of being a trading partner with China. In fact, 70% of Malaysians would like Chinese investment in the country to continue. In terms of Political Freedom, Malaysia seems to do quite poorly. In the Freedom of the World 2022, a survey created by Freedom House it was deemed partly free with a score of 50/100. Issues they face include how women and many minority groups do not receive voting rights as well as laws that are made to oppress, ineffective ways of fighting corruption, as well as transparency.



Malaysia Minister of Foreign Affairs

Since December 2022, Zambry bin Abdul Kadir has held the position of minister of foreign affairs in Malaysia under the leadership of the prime minister. Prior to that, from





August 2020 to December 2022, he was the Non-independent and Non-executive Chairman of Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad (MAHB). From February 2009 to May 2018, he served as Perak's 11th Menteri Besar. From March 2004 to March 2008, he was a member of the Perak State Executive Council. In July and August 2018, Zambry bin Abdul Kadir served for a brief while as Perak's State Leader of the Opposition. Since March 2004, he has represented Pangkor in the Perak State Legislative Assembly, and he was re-elected in 2008, 2013, and 2018 as the Chief Minister of Perak

Malaysia Minister of Defence

Mohamad Hasan, a politician from Malaysia, has held the position of minister of defense in Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's administration. Since June 2018, he has also held the positions of Deputy Chairman and Deputy President of his party. Since November 2022, Mohamad has served as a member of parliament for Rembau. Prior to that, from July 2018 to February 2019 and once more since April 2019, he served as the state leader of the opposition in Negeri Sembilan. Additionally, from March 2004 to February 2019 and again since April 2019, he served as the Rantau representative in the Negeri Sembilan State Legislative Assembly. From March 2004 to May 2018, Mohamad presided as the Menteri Besar of Negeri Sembilan and the state chairman of his party. Mohamad worked in the financial sector before entering politics. He later transitioned to the corporate world, where he held positions as the CEO of Cold Storage Malaysia Berhad and the Managing Director of Cycle and Carriage Bintang Berhad. Additionally, he served in leadership capacities on the boards of several organizations, including Khazanah Nasional Berhad and Sepang International Circuit.



Brunei:

The Sultanate of Brunei along with many other ASEAN member states have been in a territorial dispute with China. Brunei's 200 mile EEZ overlaps with China's claim over the South China Sea. Although the two have a territorial dispute over the South China Sea, China and Brunei are on good terms with each other. In 2019, President Xi Jinping of China made a state visit to the country and it has been referred to as a "exceptional moment" in relations



between the two countries. Brunei is part of the China Belt and Road Initiative and has been described as a strong supporter of it as it is enjoying the funding and infrastructure projects through the initiative. China is Brunei's largest foreign investor with China having 4.1 billion dollars invested into the country. Brunei's largest port, Muara Container terminal is the largest port in Brunei and is both operated by China and Brunei. Many have seen the relationship between Brunei and China as China trying to take advantage of the country but Brunei has claimed that it sees China as a strong economic ally.



Unlike other ASEAN member states, Brunei is an absolute monarchy. This means that the king is in charge of all internal and external affairs of the country. Brunei is referred to as a one-party state royal dictatorship. Brunei has a parliament but they are appointed by the king and not by the people of Brunei. According to the Freedom House, it has received a 7 out of 40 when it comes to political rights, however, the country is the most stable among all ASEAN member states.

Brunei Secretary of Foreign Affairs:

Your name is Eryan Yousuf. You have been appointed minister of Foreign Affairs in 2015. As Minister of Foreign Affairs, you were selected as ASEAN's special envoy to Myanmar in order to mediate the crisis that was unfolding due to the Myanmar Coup in 2021. You have expressed concerns that the Junta is implementing ASEAN's five point consensus which aims to end all hostilities in the country.



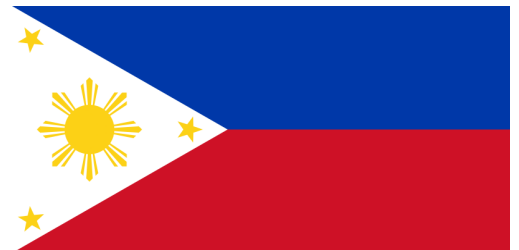
Brunei Secretary of Defence:

Your name is Habibi Halbi Mohammad Yussof. Prior to becoming secretary of Defense, you have served in the army and achieved the rank of military general. After that you have served in many other positions prior to becoming minister of defense. These include minister of culture and Commander of the Royal Brunei Land Forces. You have made visits to Singapore to strengthen ties and you also have made attempts to strengthen relations with Japan.



Philippines:

The conflict over the South China Sea has strained relations between China and the Philippines. While China's Communist Party seeks to counter American influence by gaining more influence over the Philippines and the region, the current Philippine president seeks to sever ties with China and deepen ties with the United States. The two nations have nonetheless signed a number of bilateral agreements, and ties have improved recently. But according to a 2014 survey, the majority of Filipinos are worried that territorial disputes between China and its neighbors will escalate into a war. Although the Philippines has recently worked to strengthen relations and increase cooperation with China, the average Filipinos opinion of China is still unfavorable, while their opinion of the United States is more favorable.



Although the Philippines left authoritarian rule in 1986, it still has trouble upholding the rule of law and administering justice. Democracy's oversight and accountability mechanisms are either ineffective or weakened. The state is still in danger from violent insurgencies, albeit their influence has lessened recently. Violence against activists and journalists continues to be plagued by a serious issue of impunity. Since it began in 2016, President Rodrigo Duterte's war on drugs has resulted in thousands of extrajudicial deaths. Academics and universities that are



purportedly teaching "subversive" material have come under increased attack from the Duterte administration. The government released the identities of 27 University of the Philippines graduates in 2021 under the pretext that they belonged to the Communist Party. Several universities were forced to purge their libraries of communist and "subversive" ideology texts between September and November. The Senate began looking into the Duterte administration's purchases of out-of-date COVID-19 testing kits and exorbitant medical supplies in September. Six people were detained and nine protestors were killed in March on what is known as "Bloody Sunday." Two days earlier, President Duterte had publicly asked the military and police to exterminate and execute communists throughout the nation.

Philippines Secretary of Foreign Affairs:

Philippine diplomat Enrique A. Manalo has served as the Marcos administration's secretary of foreign affairs since June 1, 2022. He has worked for the Department of Foreign Affairs since 1979 and has held a number of posts, including acting secretary of foreign affairs, undersecretary for policy, and the Philippines' 21st Permanent Representative to the UN. Manalo has also held positions as the First Secretary and consul at the Philippine Embassy in Washington, D.C., Minister Counselor at the Philippine Mission to the United Nations, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Philippine Mission to the United Nations, Permanent Representative of the Philippine Mission to the United Nations and other International Organizations, and Special Assistant to the Office of the Deputy Minister of Diplomatic Affairs.



Philippines Secretary of Defence:

Carlito Galvez Jr. is currently the Senior Undersecretary and officer-in-charge of the Department of National Defense. In 1985, he received his diploma from the Philippine Military Academy. Galvez took part in the failed coup attempt against President Corazon Aquino as a member of the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM). He led numerous units and commands in the Philippine Army and the AFP and spent the majority of his career in Mindanao, particularly on the islands of Basilan and Sulu. Galvez, who led the 104th Brigade, was recognized as leading the "best scout ranger battalion" for two years in a row (2000 and 2001). He oversaw the 6th Infantry Division while also serving as co-chairman of the Government of the Philippines Coordinating Committees on the Cessation of Hostilities (GPH-CCCH). During the Zamboanga City crisis, Galvez successfully oversaw the leadership of infantry units and the start of defense operations inside the Basilan city of Lamitan. In January 2017, he assumed control of the AFP Western Mindanao Command. During his tenure as commander, Galvez increased the scope of his peace operations in the

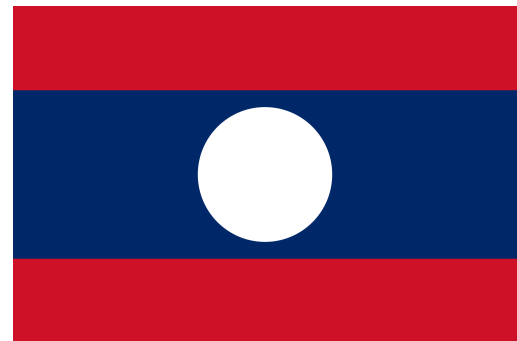




Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). With the help of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, he oversaw the operation to free the city of Marawi from terrorist groups and put safe zones in place. Galvez stopped a lot of terrorist groups' movements in the area, including piracy. He has a master's degree in Project Management from the University of New South Wales, Australia, and took the Executive Education program in Harvard University, Massachusetts. Galvez has specialties in Humanitarian Assistance, Strategic Management, and Peace-building Negotiations. He previously served as the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process, Chief Implementer of the Philippines' Declared National Policy Against COVID-19 (COVID-19 National Task Force), and 50th Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Galvez was appointed as the country's COVID-19 vaccine leader in distribution in November 2020, responsible for leading the government's efforts in bringing into the country about 245.23 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines as of May 2022, despite the global vaccine shortage.

Laos:

In 1953, the two states' relations were reestablished, with the Republic of China (also known as Nationalist China or Taiwan) being recognized as the only legal government of China. Laos changed its recognition to the PRC administration in Beijing on April 25, 1961. The royal government joined the anti-communist alliance in the Vietnam War until 1975 when the new Lao communist government re-established diplomatic ties with the PRC. However, on May 16, 1962, the royal government broke off diplomatic ties with China and reestablished ties with the Taipei government. Without immediately



posing a threat to Thailand's or Vietnam's interests in the middle and southern regions, economic relations have primarily consisted of commerce and aid that has been concentrated on building roads in the northern provinces of Laos. In 1993 and 1994, China's trade and investments with Laos increased subtly but not significantly. In 2015, Laos joined the Belt and Road Initiative, a global infrastructure initiative led by the People's Republic of China. Together, the nations have notably worked on the China-Laos Railway project, which connects Kunming with Vientiane, the capital of Laos. The project, which is believed to have cost between one-third and fifty percent of Laos' yearly GDP, sparked criticism because Laos is already over \$1.8 billion short of being able "to address the projected fiscal deficit and repay domestic and overseas loans by the end of the year." Only 30% of the railway will be owned by Laos; the remaining 70% will be divided between Chinese state-owned enterprises.

While Laos maintains a friendly relationship with China, it also takes measures to ensure that it does not fully support China's actions that may be deemed controversial by the international community. Laos supports many proposals which have taken a collective stance in pushing back against China's territorial claims in the South China Sea. Furthermore, Laos has also expressed concerns over the environmental and social impacts of China's infrastructure projects, such as the controversial Mekong River dam projects. Despite its close ties with China, Laos



recognizes the importance of maintaining its sovereignty and independence while balancing its diplomatic relations with neighboring countries and international powers.

Laos struggles with political rights. In Laos, a one-party state, the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP), which is in power, controls all elements of politics. There is neither a formal opposition nor a free civil society. All candidates for the National Assembly, whose members choose the president and prime minister, are investigated by the LPRP. Female candidates secured 22% of the seats in the National Assembly in the elections held in February 2021, despite the political system not taking women's interests into account. Government regulation of almost every aspect of life creates numerous chances for bribes and fraud, while laws intended to prevent corruption by officials are rarely enforced. While serving as prime minister, Thongloun Launchedan anti-corruption drive that had some positive effects, but official corruption still exists. Authorities intimidate state critics with the use of the law and other means, and self-censorship is common. Nearly all media outlets are owned by the government, but some independent ones have recently emerged, mostly entertainment magazines that avoid political commentary. In Laos, no law governs access to information, and the government has kept quiet about a 2018 dam collapse that claimed 43 lives. Even after the collapse in 2018, Laos is still planning to build new dams on the Mekong River.

Laos Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Since April 2016, Saleumxay Kommasith, a Laotian politician who you will represent, has served as the country's minister of foreign affairs. He was born in Houaphan Province, Laos, on October 31, 1968. From 1986 to 1992, Saleumxay Kommasith attended the Moscow State University of International Relations, where he received his MA in international relations. From 1996 to 1997, he earned a second MA from Monash University in Australia in international study and development. Lao, Russian, French, and English are among the four languages that Saleumxay Kommasith is fluent in. Along with serving as the Permanent Representative of Laos to the UN, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Director-General of the Department of International Organizations, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, he has held a long list of positions in the government. In March 2021, the 9th National Assembly elected Saleumxay Kommasith to a second term as minister of foreign affairs.



Laos Minister of Defence:

The Lao People's Armed Forces, the Lao People's Democratic Republic's armed forces, are commanded by the Minister of Defense. In addition to leading the Ministry of Defence, the Minister of Defence is in charge of directing and controlling the armed forces. You are Chansamone Chanyalath who has served as the country's minister of defense since 2016. Chanyalath, who is in charge of the Ministry of Defence, is in





charge of leading and directing all of the military's divisions, including the Lao People's Army, Air Force, and Navy. He also controls military personnel development and training, ensuring that the armed forces are ready to defend the nation's security interests.

Vietnam:

China and Vietnam have had tumultuous relations for countless years. Vietnam is apprehensive of the Chinese government despite its sinospheric (East Asian culture) and communist heritage because of centuries of invasion by the imperial forerunner of modern China.

Despite China's assistance to North Vietnam throughout the Vietnam War, relations between the two countries deteriorated after Saigon's fall in 1975 and the unification of Vietnam in 1976. The Khmer Rouge, a party that China had supported and had turned to genocidal

behavior, had been in power in Cambodia when it was overthrown by Vietnam. The Sino-Vietnamese War started in 1979 when China invaded Vietnam. Following cross-border raids and skirmishes, China and Vietnam engaged in a protracted border conflict from 1979 to 1990. Although the two nations continue to disagree over political and territorial issues in the South China Sea (or East Sea), both sides have since worked to strengthen their diplomatic and economic ties. Vietnam accused China of striking one of its fishing boats in May 2013 and of ramming and sinking a fishing boat in May 2014. Both nations fought over an oil rig in disputed South China Sea territory in May 2014, which led to deadly anti-Chinese demonstrations in Vietnam. Rioters targeted Chinese enterprises in an industrial park in southern Vietnam and attacked hundreds of foreign-owned buildings there. According to a 2015 analysis by the Council on Foreign Relations, there was an increased possibility of a military conflict between China and Vietnam. Chinese ships continued to attack and sink Vietnamese fishing boats and other vessels in various events throughout 2019 and 2020. Vietnam only made public comments and diplomatic protests in response to these instances. Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh promised the Chinese representative in Hanoi in August 2021 that Vietnam will not join an alliance to oppose China. Pham said that in order to speed up talks and produce a code of conduct in the disputed South China Sea zone, the two countries should collaborate with ASEAN. A Chinese ship entered Vietnam's Special Economic Zone in March 2023, which led to a chase between Chinese and Vietnamese ships in the South China Sea.



Being a communist state, Vietnam provides little to no political rights. The Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) is the dominant party in the one-party state of Vietnam. Although independent candidates are theoretically permitted to run in legislative elections, in reality, most are not. The freedoms of speech, religion, and participation in civic life are severely constrained. The use of social media and the internet by citizens to express disapproval and disseminate uncensored information has come under increased scrutiny from the authorities. Although the Politburo and Central Committee of the CPV actually predetermine all choices for top executive positions, the president is elected by the National Assembly for a five-year term. The CPV, which won 485 members in the mainly rubber-stamp elections of



2021, tightly controls the National Assembly elections. Political power is monopolized by the CPV, and no other parties are permitted to hold office. Members of unregistered opposition parties may be detained and imprisoned. Any democratic transfer of power is impossible due to the one-party setup. Government policies and the legislative agenda are decided by the CPV leadership, who are neither freely elected nor answerable to the people. Government officials and the CPV have acknowledged the rise in public displeasure with corruption as well as the rise in arrests for corruption-related offenses in recent years. Anti-corruption laws are typically selectively enforced, and this is frequently due to political rivalries.

Vietnam Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Since 2021, Bùi Thanh Sn (who you will represent) has served as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam's minister of foreign affairs. In 1986, Bùi enrolled in the Communist Party of Vietnam. He obtained his diploma from the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam in 1984. He earned his master's degree in international relations from Columbia University in 1993. In September 1987, he began serving as a research officer at the Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was assigned to a number of posts at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including assistant to the minister of foreign affairs, deputy head, then head of the Europe-America Department, deputy director, then director of the Foreign Policy Department, and director of the Foreign Policy Department. In November 2009, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung promoted Bùi to the position of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. He was initially elected to the National Assembly in May 2016 from the Nông Province's constituency number 2. In April 2020, he was reappointed as the deputy minister of foreign affairs. On the recommendation of Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, the XIV National Assembly of Vietnam elected Bùi Thanh Sn as Minister of Foreign Affairs on April 8, 2021.

Vietnam Minister of National Defence

Vietnamese General, politician, and Minister of National Defense Phan Văn Giang is the role you will assume. In 2016, Giang became a member of the Communist Party of Vietnam's Central Committee. In the Vietnam People's Army, he has held a number of positions, including Deputy Commander and Chief of Staff of The 312th Division, The 1st Corps, Commander of the 312th Division, The 1st Corps, Deputy Commander and Chief of Staff of The 1st Corps, and Commander in Vietnam's People's party.

Thailand:

Thailand has a democratic parliamentary constitutional monarchy. Although Thailand has a monarch, the monarch has no say in government affairs and is just a figurehead. Thailand's government is composed of three branches which are the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The Legislative Branch Consists of the National Legislative Assembly, The Senate, and House of Representatives.





The National Legislative Assembly is composed of 220 members which are all appointed by the king of Thailand. Unlike the Senate and the National Legislative Assembly, Thailand's house of representatives members are democratically elected by the people of Thailand. The ruling party is the Palang Pracharath Party. In the past two decades, Thailand had two coups. The first coup occurred in 2006 where the Thai Military with the backing of the king overthrew the prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra. The second coup happened in 2014 where they overthrew Thaksin's sister. Today's ruling party is pro-military and the country has been rated as a flawed democracy by the Economist.

Thailand is a middle man when it comes to relations between the United States and China. Thailand has been part of the Belt and Road initiative and has received a lot of funding to build their infrastructure projects. Thailand has also attempted to improve relations with the country after the 2014 coup as relations worsened. Although Thailand is trying to improve relations, it does not want to fall into a relationship where Thailand has total influence over the country and would like to become self-reliant.

Thailand Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Your name is Don Pramudiwani. You have served as ambassador to the country of Switzerland, Vatican City, China, and Mongolia prior to becoming the Minister of Foreign Affairs. You are not part of any political party however based on Thailand's foreign policy, you are to maintain close relations with other ASEAN member states while also learning about the U.S..



Thailand Minister of Defence / Prime Minister

Your name is Prayut Chan. You are currently the Prime Minister of Thailand. Prior to becoming the prime minister of Thailand, you served in the military and have been the Minister of Defence since 2019. After you launched the 2014 Thailand coup which resulted in the ousting of Yingluck Shinawatra, you granted yourself sweeping power over all of Thailand. Your current relations with China are very positive with "fruitful cooperation" (according to you).



Singapore:

Singapore is one of the financial and trading hubs in the world. Singapore was once part of the Malaysian Federation but was kicked out due to ideological differences. After Singapore became independent, it was one of the most impoverished countries in the world however through the increase in trade and globalization, Singapore has become quite successful. Singapore maintains a neutral position when it comes to the United States and China.



According to the Freedom House, Singapore was given a score of 19/40 when it comes to political rights. Even though the country's constitution guarantees the right to freedom of speech, press, and right to assemble, the country



has taken actions to limit the freedom. For instance Singapore has the power to limit the power of local and foreign news outlets in the country. To add on, the country is a representative democracy and has a parliament where people can vote for their member of parliament. However only one party (People's Action Party) has dominated politics since its independence. Although the country is considered one of the least corrupt countries, the freedom house claimed that the press is not free.

Singapore Minister of Foreign Affairs:

You are Vivian Balakrishnan. You have previously served many positions such as Second Minister for Trade and Industry, Minister for Community, Youth and Sports, Second Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts, as well as Minister for the Environment and Water Resources. You recognize the mutual support between Singapore and China during the COVID-19 pandemic, and encourage more cooperation between the two countries to innovate and support each other, such as in economic growth, research and innovation.



Singapore Minister of Defence:

You are Ng Eng Hen. You have served as Minister of Defence since 2011. You wish to avoid any military conflicts, instead calling on world leaders and military commanders in the region to grow a deeper mutual understanding and respect and grow a sense of awareness about the consequences that a war could bring. You wish to avoid any sort of war in Asia, whether it be a conflict between Europe and Asia or just within the Indo-Pacific region.



Myanmar:

Myanmar's relationship with China has been a matter of debate for years as it shaped the country socially, economically, and politically. Also, the geopolitical situation of Myanmar has influenced the democratic transition of the country. Especially, since Myanmar has a key buffer state between India and China. Politically, Myanmar has sought to keep a balanced neutrality in International affairs. Also, the nation's engagement with the United States with other Western powers caused tension for China, and ever since China tried to counterbalance China's influence through its own engagement with Myanmar. Economically, Myanmar is one of the countries China has invested in. However, concerns have been raised regarding the impact of these investments on the local environment and communities, as well as the potential for Chinese firms to dominate Myanmar's economy. As complex as it sounds, China had a multifaceted relationship with Myanmar. As Myanmar continues navigating its changing geopolitical landscape, its relationship with China will likely remain a critical factor in diplomatic relations. Myanmar has had a tumultuous political history, with a military junta ruling the country for many years. The country transitioned to a quasi-civilian government in 2011, and a civilian government took office in 2016.





However, in 2021, the military seized power in a coup, and ever since the country has been under military rule. Myanmar has a history of suppressing political opposition, and political freedom is severely restricted under military law, with widespread arrests, detentions, and violence against protesters and political activists.

Myanmar Ministry of Defense:

General Mya Tun Oo is a Burmese military officer and politician who serves as the incumbent Deputy Prime Minister of Myanmar since 2021 February and Minister for Defence. He has been a member of the State Administration Council since February 2021. He is also a member of the National Defence and Security Council as the Minister of Defence. Mya Tun Oo's rapid rise through the armed forces was noted by political observers, known for his professional record in both field combat and staff roles. After years of speculation, Mya Tun Oo was appointed by the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services as the Minister for Defence on 1 February 2021. On the following day (2 February 2021), he was appointed as a member of the State Administration Council by the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.

Myanmar Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Than Swe is a Burmese diplomat and military officer who has been holding office in the Ministry of foreign affairs since 1st February 2023. He graduated from the 16th intake of the Defence Services Academy, which is famous for being the home of many other prominent political figures in Myanmar. Between May 2000 and March 2009, Than Swe worked in the Ministry of Progress of Border Areas. July 2012 was the time when he was appointed as Myanmar's ambassador to the United States, becoming the first to serve and signaling the restoration of full diplomatic ties between the two countries. During the coup d'état in Myanmar which was the time period when the democratically elected ruling party vested power to junta or military forces, Than Swe was appointed as the head of the Union Civil Service Board, until August 2022. During his term, he reinstated policies during the Than Shwe era, including military-style uniforms for civil servants, and requirements to undergo military training and shooting practice for civil servants. After the 2021 Myanmar coup d'état, Than Swe was appointed as the head of the Union Civil Service Board. During his term, he reinstated policies during the Than Shwe era, including military-style uniforms for civil servants, and requirements to undergo military training and shooting practice for civil servants. He was appointed chair of the Anti-Corruption Commission of Myanmar on 19 August 2022. In November 2022, he was sanctioned by the European Union, for his role in legitimizing the military coup and involvement in legal proceedings against the deposed leaders.



Indonesia:

Just like Myanmar, Indonesia also has a compound relationship that has evolved over time. Even throughout history, Indonesia and





China had had a complex relationship with China as well. Today, the relationship between Indonesia and China was influenced by numerous political, economic, and strategic factors. Economically, China has always remained one of the largest trading partners of Indonesia. The Chinese companies in Indonesia are involved in a range of infrastructure and development projects (Jakarta-Bandung-a high-speed railway project), the construction of power plants, and the development of industrial parks. However, some Indonesians have expressed concerns about the impact of Chinese investment on the country's economy and national security. Politically, Indonesia has maintained a balanced relationship with China, while also seeking to maintain its independence and sovereignty. Indonesia has sought to assert itself as a regional leader, promoting regional cooperation and ASEAN unity. In recent years, Indonesia has also sought to assert its independence from China by taking a more active role in regional security issues, such as the South China Sea dispute.

Indonesia has taken an active role in regional issues. Among them, the name of the South China Sea Dispute always comes first. While China is an important trading partner and investor in Indonesia, Indonesia has also sought to maintain its independence and sovereignty and to balance its relationship with China against its relationship with other regional and global powers. As Indonesia continues to assert itself as a regional leader, its relationship with China is likely to remain a key factor in its foreign policy.

Indonesia's Ministry of Defence:

Prabowo Subianto has been serving as a minister in foreign affairs from Prabowo Subianto Djojohadikusumo is a minister of defense and currently serving as an incumbent position holder of the ministry. He was born on 17th October 1951 and had already served as an Indonesian politician, businessman, and also former army lieutenant general. His father was a prominent Indonesian economist Sumitro Djojohadikusumo. He was previously married to late President Suharto's second daughter but was divorced in 1998 due to an ongoing Indonesian political crisis.



As a student, Prabowo graduated from the Indonesia Military Academy. 1970 was the year when he entered the military and served in the Special Forces, Kopassus-an Indonesian special force that incorporates the security activities for the government until 1998 when he was appointed as chief of the Strategic Reserve Command also known as Korstrad in 1998. That same year, he was dishonorably discharged from the military and subsequently banned from entering the United States because of alleged human rights violations. He has been accused of a national variant of conservatism. In the 2014 presidential election, he was one of the contestants but defeated by Jakarta Governor Joko Widodo. He contested the 2014 presidential election and was defeated by Jakarta Governor whom he initially debated against although he made another unsuccessful run for the presidency in 2019. On 23 October 2019, Prabowo was inaugurated as Indonesia's Minister of Defense by president Joko Widodo. Shortly after his inauguration, Prabowo began advocating for a "total people's war" doctrine for Indonesia's national defense. Following an incident in late 2019 where Chinese vessels violated Indonesian EEZ off



the Natuna Islands, Prabowo called for a cautious response, referring to China as a "friendly nation", for which he was criticized by netizens for being "too soft".

Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

Born on 27th November, 1962, Tetno Lestari Prisani Marsudi is an Indonesian diplomat who has been serving as the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Cabinet under Joko Widodo since 2014. In Fact, She is the first female minister appointed to the post. She was previously the Indonesian Ambassador to the Netherlands from 2012 to 2014, as well as Ambassador to Iceland and Norway from 2005 to 2008. Marsudi graduated in International European Law and Policy and was recruited in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from the university. She served as the first secretary for Economic Affairs at the Indonesian Embassy. On 27 October 2014, Marsudi was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs by President Joko Widodo in his Working Cabinet. In 2021, Marsudi was appointed co-chair – alongside Karina Gould and Lia Tadesse – of the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC) Engagement Group; the AMC is a financing instrument established to support the participation of 92 lower-middle and low-income economies in the COVAX Facility and ensure their access to COVID-19 vaccines.



Cambodia:

Historically, During the Khmer Rouge period, China has been a key supporter of Cambodia. Economically, China's bilateral trade model fits well with Cambodia's economic policy. Chinese companies are involved in the construction of various highways, bridges, and power plants in Cambodia. But the involvement of China has always been a matter of tension in Cambodia several times. Politically, Cambodia has maintained a close relationship with China, while also seeking to maintain its independence and sovereignty. Cambodia has been a strong supporter of China's policies in the South China Sea and has opposed efforts by ASEAN to assert its collective position on the issue. Cambodia has also been criticized for its human rights record, and for its apparent alignment with China on regional and global issues. China has also been concerned about the influence of Western powers in Cambodia and has sought to counterbalance its influence through its own engagement with the country. As Cambodia continues to navigate its changing geopolitical landscape, its relationship with China.



Cambodia's Ministry of National Defense:

Tea Banh is a prominent politician who held the position of minister for the National Defense of Cambodia from 27 June 2006 and still has been in the same position. He is also the prime minister of the country. Tea Banh represented the CPP(Cambodian





People's Party). Prior to his term, he was elected to represent Siem Reap Province in the National Assembly of Cambodia. Previously he had served as a former general. In his term from 1987 to 1991, he was a member of the Kampuchean People's Party(KPP) , which was basically the original name of Cambodia's People's Party.

Cambodia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

Park Sokkon is a Cambodian politician, diplomat and journalist, who currently serves as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Cabinet of Cambodia since 2016 and also the Deputy Prime Minister of Cambodia since 2018. During his early life, he studied law in his hometown Phnom Penh between 1972 and 1975 and entered the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Armed Forces in 1979. He eventually went on to become a 4-star general as Spokesperson of the Royal



Cambodian Armed Forces. He also spent three years as an ambassador in Europe. He was sworn in as foreign minister on April 5, 2016. His predecessor Hor Namhong retired from his post as foreign minister on 4 April 2016 after 17 years in office, though remained as a deputy prime minister. He was the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications from 2013 to 2016. Prior to being named Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, Sokhonn was Vice-President of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority, which incorporates landmine clearance and support to landmine survivors in Cambodia. During that tenure, he was elected to chair the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, better known as the Ottawa Treaty, aimed at eliminating landmines around the world, for one year, including presiding over the diplomatic treaty's meeting in Phnom Penh.

Observer States:

China:

The connection between China and ASEAN has developed into a comprehensive strategic cooperation, which is advantageous for both parties. Both the inclusive tenets of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) and ASEAN's dominant position in the regional security architecture are acknowledged in the joint statement. Supporting ASEAN centrality is crucial and ought to encourage regional stability and collaboration since it demonstrates a commitment to multilateralism and an inclusive regional framework. Over the past 30 years, trade between China and ASEAN has multiplied by 80, with China becoming ASEAN's top trading partner in 2009. As a result of the pandemic, ASEAN became China's principal ally. The rise of Chinese FDI into ASEAN has also increased, which is good for the region's economy. There are considerable people-to-people





exchanges between China and ASEAN, with 200,000 students taking part in exchanges and 200 ASEAN cities having sister-city relationships with Chinese cities.

There are however negative aspects of the relationship between China and ASEAN. Relationships may suffer as a result of China's violations of the territorial waters and ships of several ASEAN nations, such as the Philippines. The implementation of the Code of Conduct (COC) declaration is included in the joint statement, but there is no specified timetable for doing so, which could cause ambiguity and possibly cause confrontations in the South China Sea. Some ASEAN nations, particularly those that are CPTPP members, may not agree with China's opposition to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

USA:

Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the USA, and China over the past years have witnessed social and political turmoil. The two countries had maintained a bitter rivalry towards each other. had created social and political turmoil. In 1979, The U.S opened relations with the PRC in 1979 and enjoyed friendly relations until the Obama Administration when China began to have a territorial



dispute in the South China sea. In 2018, China and the U.S engaged in a trade war. Today the United States criticizes China for its human rights abuses as well as trying to take advantage of other countries through its belt and road initiative. President Biden claims that the U.S only seeks competition with the country and would not like to start another cold war

The United States is a representative democracy. It is composed of three branches which are the Judicial, Legislative, and the Executive Branch. The United States has the Senate and the House of Representatives which both of its members are elected by the people. The head of state is also elected by the people. The United States is seen as one of the leaders of democracy. When it comes to its foreign policy, it aims to protect democracy across the world. A recent example of this is how it condemned the Myanmar Coup and placed sanctions on the Junta.

Russia:

Russia has maintained an alliance-like relationship with China. The two nations established a "constructive partnership" in 1992, eventually creating a treaty of sorts in 2001. Their shared land border was





established by the 2001 and 2021 renewals of the Treaty of Good Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation. Russia and China have close military, economic, and political ties and frequently cooperate on international issues. After Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, relations improved and Russia's dependence on China increased as a result of international sanctions. In addition to repeating Russian propaganda and opposing economic sanctions, China refused to denounce the invasion. Russia and China's economic relations have had a mixed history, with trade volumes changing but hoping to reach \$200 billion by 2024. They also would join economic regional blocs such as RIC and BRICS solidifying their relations as economic partners. In order to simplify financial transactions and lessen the influence of the US dollar, China and Russia have engaged in currency swaps. They have collaborated on infrastructure initiatives like the "New Silk Road" program and the building of cross-border infrastructure.

Vladimir Putin, the country's president, holds a disproportionate amount of power. The political system in Russia is autocratic and has little room for political involvement and plurality. The Kremlin uses a variety of tactics to rig elections and stifle dissent. Despite several anomalies, the United Russia party won a sizable supermajority in the Duma elections of 2021. Expanded legal prohibitions on "undesirable" and "extremist" organizations resulted in heightened censorship and the closure of Memorial International, a human rights organization. A serious COVID-19 outbreak has been reported in Russia, and low vaccination rates have been related to mistrust of the government. Elections are not thought to be free and fair because the electoral process favors the governing United Russia party. The Kremlin carefully controls political parties, and the opposition encounters challenges and persecution. Elections are not a viable means for the opposition to garner more supporters or influence. A variety of demographic groupings, including racial, religious, and gender-based ones, have their political chances and rights restricted. The political landscape is dominated by the government, and corruption is rampant. Government operations lack accountability and transparency. With media censorship and the application of nebulous anti-extremism legislation, freedom of expression and religion are constrained. Media outlets that are independent risk intimidation, financing limitations, and shutdown. In order to regulate online content and penalize those who promote "illegal" or "extremist" content.

E.U:

As a delegate representing the EU you will have the political, economic, and jurisdiction that the EU has. According to the high-ranking Josep Borrell, the EU understands China as an economic and technological powerhouse. However, the EU wants China to take more responsibility when it comes to the world stage and its economic investments in various countries. By this, the EU wants China to take into account the shock it could have on supply chains and national security. More recently, the EU has been at odds with China due to China's



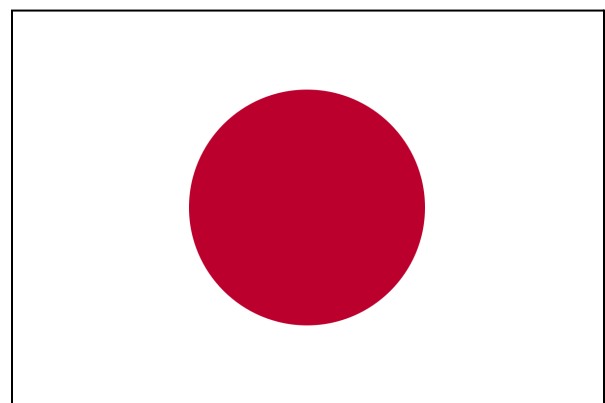


countermeasures to EU sanctions on human rights. This does not mean the EU has cut ties with China, in 2021 they were the largest partner for trade with 223 billion euros exported and 472 billion euros imported.

The EU has outlined its own parameters for its fundamental rights. Under Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union, the values outlined include; respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. Recently the EU and ASEAN have partnered and planned out cooperation early this year to explore pathways to enforce child's rights, children's access to justice, enhanced youth participation, migrant workers' social protection, business, and human rights, freedom of expression, and strengthened gender mainstreaming. As a delegate, you should focus on outlining these goals for the committee.

Japan:

China has had a significant impact on Japan throughout its history. After Shinzo Abe became Prime Minister of Japan in September 2006, Sino-Japanese relations improved significantly. In addition, a joint historical study conducted by China and Japan resulted in a report in 2010 that suggested a new consensus on the subject of Japanese war crimes. In the East China Sea, the Senkaku Islands conflict led to a series of combative confrontations, vehement rhetoric, and demonstrations in China and Taiwan. The economies of China and Japan are the second and third



largest in the world by nominal GDP(Gross Domestic Product) and the first and fourth largest by GDP PPP(Gross Domestic Product on Purchasing Power Parity)respectively. Sino-Japanese relations have been plagued by geopolitical tensions since the end of World War II; this animosity stems from the history of the Japanese war, imperialism, and territorial disputes in the eastern part of the South China Sea. Japanese officials were cautious not to isolate the PRC, just like West European and American leaders, and they continued to trade and other relations generally commensurate with the policy of other industrialized democracies. However, they also restricted economic ties to the PRC, following the example set by the US. It was difficult to alleviate fears at the popular level in the PRC. Chinese authorities' warnings to their Japanese counterparts were strengthened by demonstrations against Japan organized by students. After the PRC government brutally suppressed pro-democracy protests in the spring of 1989, Japanese decision-makers realized that the PRC's new situation was extremely delicate and required careful handling to prevent Japanese actions that would push the PRC further away from reforms.

In the parliamentary democracy of Japan, civil liberties and political freedoms are widely upheld. The freely elected parliament appoints the prime minister, and legislative elections are fair and impartial. Although malapportionment in favor of rural districts has been a recurrent issue, Japan's electoral laws are generally fair and effectively enforced. The opposition has a chance to strengthen its support or take control of the government through elections, and



parties are typically not subject to excessive restrictions on registration or operation. However, there are still issues to be resolved, including claims of improperly close ties between the government and the business sector and racial and gender discrimination.

Australia:

Australia and China both engage economically, culturally, and politically, as they are both involved in organizations such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the East Asia Summit, and the Group of 20. China is Australia's largest trading partner as of 2018, and China has invested in some of Australia's largest mining companies, which is one of Australia's biggest industries. However, relations have begun to weaken due to a number of factors, such as concerns of political influence in government, universities, and media, as well as the Chinese stance on the South China Sea dispute. The COVID-19 pandemic has also heightened tensions after Australia called for an independent, international investigation into the origins of the virus.



Changes that China made to their trade policies that followed were seen as political retaliation and economic coercion. In August 2021, Australia announced a plan to buy American nuclear submarines, interpreted as a blow to Australia's and China's relationship. China has also been critical of the creation of AUKUS in September 2021, a security pact between Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom.

Australia has had a good record of promoting and protecting political rights. The current Australian government consists of a parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy. The leader of the elected majority party is the prime minister, who works as the head of the government. Elections are free and fair, and electoral laws are fair and impartial. The people have the right to organize into different political parties without any restrictions, and the power rotates between parties frequently.

Bloc Analysis: Here are some examples of a few blocs that can be created. These blocs will often be your group who you work with for the working paper. We encourage you to make blocks along with countries with the similar motives in order to do well in committee

Topic A:

Pro-China:

- Includes countries with strong economic ties to China such as Cambodia and Laos.
- Prioritizes economic cooperation with China over political rights issues.
- Likely to support China's policies in the region and resist criticism of its human rights record.



- May be reluctant to take a confrontational approach towards China and prefer to maintain stability in the region.

Bloc 3: Neutral

- Includes countries that do not have strong economic or political ties with China such as Brunei and Myanmar.
- Prioritizes maintaining stability in the region and avoiding conflict.
- May be willing to support initiatives that promote human rights and political freedoms, but will avoid taking sides in the China-US rivalry

Pro-Democracy:

- Includes countries with a strong commitment to democratic values such as Indonesia and the Philippines.
- Prioritizes human rights and political freedoms over economic cooperation with China.
- Likely to criticize China's policies in the region and call for greater respect for human rights.
- May be willing to take a confrontational approach towards China and advocate for stronger actions to promote democracy in the region.

ASEAN Centrists:

- Includes countries that prioritize maintaining the unity and centrality of ASEAN such as Thailand and Malaysia.
- Prioritizes dialogue and cooperation among ASEAN members as the key to resolving regional issues.
- May support a more neutral stance towards China and advocate for ASEAN-led initiatives to address political rights issues in the region.