

BCHighMUN 30



Prisoners of War: Human Experimentation

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Co-Chair: Dylan Duncan

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Letter from the Chair

Dear Delegates,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the committee Rights of Prisoners: Human Experimentation for BCHigh MUN 30! I am very excited to dive into this complex topic and am interested to see how you approach it.. To avoid confusion, everything discussed in this committee will happen as of the present day. I started Model UN during my sophomore year of high school. It has been a really great experience for me because it forces me to get out of my comfort zone.

One of my favorite Model UN moments was being a part of the Crisis Staff at our past conferences. Working with many committees simultaneously gave me much experience on how to keep our debate going. I hope that we can have a substantive debate, and create a worldwide solution to these human rights atrocities worldwide.

Please send your position papers to my email address below before the committee session starts. Especially given how nuanced this topic is and the many factors at play, it will be very helpful to articulate your position ahead of time, and the best paper receives an award.

I look forward to seeing you all at the conference on March 5th. This committee will be best if everyone is prepared, so I hope you all do your research and come ready to have a good time.

Regards,

Yasin Khan '22 Directeur de la Communication BC High Model UN

Chair, Human Experimentation Committee

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Letter from the Co-Chair

Hello Delegates,

Welcome to BC High! My name is Dylan Duncan, I am in my senior year at bchigh and this is my third year participating in Model UN. Outside of the classroom, I am on the football and basketball team and enjoy playing videogames and watching TV.

This is my second time co-charing, and the first time was a great experience. I hope to have a similar experience this time around. I hope to hear some interesting points and intense debates from both sides. This is a complex topic, so I look forward to seeing your research and the arguments that arise.

I look forward to meeting you all, and hope to hear some great conversations. And most of all I cannot wait to see the resolutions you guys come up with. Once again look forwards to meeting you all.

Sincerely,

Dylan Duncan

Co-Chair, Human Experimentation Committee

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Historical Information: Case Studies

Japan:

“The Japanese embarked on a large-scale programme to develop biological weapons during the Second World War. The father of the Japanese biological weapons programme, the radical nationalist Shiro Ishii, thought that such weapons would constitute formidable tools to further Japan's imperialistic plans. He started his research in 1930 at the Tokyo Army Medical School and later became head of Japan's bioweapon programme during the Second World War. At its height, the programme employed more than 5,000 people, and killed as many as 600 prisoners a year in human experiments in just one of its 26 centres. The Japanese tested at least 25 different disease-causing agents on prisoners and unsuspecting civilians. During the war, the Japanese army poisoned more than 1,000 water wells in Chinese villages to study cholera and typhus outbreaks. Japanese planes dropped plague-infested fleas over Chinese cities or distributed them by means of saboteurs in rice fields and along roads. Some of the epidemics they caused persisted for years and continued to kill more than 30,000 people in 1947, long after the Japanese had surrendered¹.”

Nazi Germany:

Between 1939 and 1945, at least seventy medical research projects involving cruel and often lethal experimentation on human subjects were conducted in Nazi concentration camps. These projects were carried out by established institutions within the Third Reich and fell into three areas: research aimed at improving the survival and rescue of German troops; testing of medical procedures and pharmaceuticals; and experiments that sought to confirm Nazi racial ideology. More than seven thousand victims of such

¹ The History of Biological Warfare.” EMBO Reports, vol. 4, no. S1, June 2003, pp. S47–52. embopress.org (Atypon), <https://doi.org/10.1038/sj.embor.embor849>.

medical experiments have been documented. Victims include Jews, Poles, Roma (Gypsies), political prisoners, Soviet prisoners of war, homosexuals, and Catholic priests².”

Some of the most notorious experiments include:

“High Altitude: In 1942, Sigmund Rascher and others conducted high-altitude experiments on prisoners at Dachau. Eager to find out how best to save German pilots forced to eject at high altitude, they placed inmates into low-pressure chambers that simulated altitudes as high as 68,000 feet and monitored their physiological response as they succumbed and died. Rascher was said to dissect victims' brains while they were still alive to show that high-altitude sickness resulted from the formation of tiny air bubbles in the blood vessels of a certain part of the brain. Of 200 people subjected to these experiments, 80 died outright and the remainder were executed.

Freezing: To determine the most effective means for treating German pilots who had become severely chilled from ejecting into the ocean, or German soldiers who suffered extreme exposure on the Russian front, Rascher and others conducted freezing experiments at Dachau. For up to five hours at a time, they placed victims into vats of icy water, either in aviator suits or naked; they took others outside in the freezing cold and strapped them down naked. As the victims writhed in pain, foamed at the mouth, and lost consciousness, the doctors measured changes in the patients' heart rate, body temperature, muscle reflexes, and other factors. When a prisoner's internal body temperature fell to 79.7°F, the doctors tried rewarming him using hot sleeping bags, scalding baths, even naked women forced to copulate with the victim. Some 80 to 100 patients perished during these experiments.

For the benefit of the German Army, whose frontline soldiers suffered greatly from gas gangrene, a type of progressive gangrene, doctors at the Ravensbrück concentration camp performed studies to test the effectiveness of sulfanilamide and other drugs in curbing such infections. They inflicted battlefield-like wounds in victims, then infected the wounds with bacteria such as streptococcus, tetanus,

² Medical Experiments — United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
<https://www.ushmm.org/collections/bibliography/medical-experiments>.

and gas gangrene. The doctors aggravated the resulting infection by rubbing ground glass and wood shavings into the wound, and they tied off blood vessels on either side of the injury to simulate what would happen to an actual war wound. Victims suffered intense agony and serious injury, and some of them died as a result.

Twins: In an effort to find ways to more effectively multiply the German race, Dr. Josef Mengele performed experiments on twins at Auschwitz in hopes of plumbing the secrets of multiple births. After taking all the body measurements and other living data he could from selected twins, Mengele and his collaborators dispatched them with a single injection of chloroform to the heart. Of about 1,000 pairs of twins experimented upon, only about 200 pairs survived.

Poison: Researchers at Buchenwald concentration camp developed a method of individual execution by injecting Russian prisoners with phenol and cyanide. Experimenters also tested various poisons on the human body by secreting noxious chemicals in prisoners' food or shooting inmates with poison bullets. Victims who did not die during these experiments were killed to allow the experimenters to perform autopsies.

Tuberculosis: To determine if people had any natural immunities to tuberculosis, and to develop a vaccine against the disease, Dr. Kurt Heissmeyer injected live tubercle bacilli (bacteria that are a major cause of TB) into the lungs of inmates at the Neuengamme concentration camp. About 200 adult subjects died, and Heissmeyer had 20 children from Auschwitz hung in an effort to hide evidence of the experiments from approaching Allied forces.

Bone, muscle, and joint transplantation: To learn if a limb or joint from one person could be successfully attached to another who had lost that limb or joint, experimenters at Ravensbruck amputated legs and shoulders from inmates in useless attempts to transplant them onto other victims. They also removed sections of bones, muscles, and nerves from prisoners to study regeneration of these body parts. Victims suffered excruciating pain, mutilation, and permanent disability as a result.

Seawater-Dr. Hans Eppinger and others at Dachau conducted experiments on how to make seawater drinkable. The doctors forced roughly 90 Gypsies to drink only seawater while also depriving them of food. The Gypsies became so dehydrated that they reportedly licked floors after they had been mopped just to get a drop of fresh water. The experiments caused enormous pain and suffering and resulted in serious bodily injury³.”

United States:

Most of the experiments are 40 to 80 years old, and included giving hepatitis to mental patients in Connecticut, squirting a pandemic flu virus up the noses of prisoners in Maryland, and injecting cancer cells into chronically ill people at a New York hospital. Researchers uncovered 40 ethically dubious experiments by combing through medical journals and news reports at the time.

There were some very noted researchers who were involved in studies that involved infecting mental patients or prisoners, including Jonas Salk, who’s famous for inventing the polio vaccine. In an attempt to see if an experimental flu vaccine worked, in 1942 he and his colleagues worked at a state insane asylum in Michigan exposing male patients to the flu. Some of these patients had vaccines, some of them didn’t⁴.

³ NOVA Online | Holocaust on Trial | The Experiments.
<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/holocaust/experiside.html>. Accessed 31 Jan. 2022.

⁴ “Report: Medical Experiments Conducted on U.S. Prisoners, Patients.” PBS NewsHour, 28 Feb. 2011, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/health/medical-slideshow-code>.

The Issue

This committee will take place in 2022. Today torture, mistreatment of prisoners, and violation of human rights is prevalent across the planet.

Torture is defined by the UN Convention Against Torture as "...the intentional infliction of severe physical or mental pain or suffering for purposes such as obtaining information or a confession, or punishing, intimidating or coercing someone," and is always illegal. There are many publically known torture cases in prisons worldwide, while even more cases remain confidential.

Questions to Consider

- 1. Are there universal rights granted to prisoners of war? Do nations have an obligation to intervene if they are violated?*
- 2. How can reparations be made to the countries or families of soldiers subject to experimentation?*

List of Delegates

1. Afghanistan
2. Bangladesh
3. Brazil
4. Canada
5. China
6. Cuba
7. Democratic People's Republic of Korea
8. Ethiopia
9. France
10. Germany
11. Hungary
12. Iran
13. Iraq
14. Italy
15. Japan
16. Kazakhstan
17. Morocco
18. Niger
19. Pakistan
20. Philippines
21. Russian Federation
22. Saudi Arabia
23. Spain
24. Sudan
25. Uganda
26. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
27. United States of America
28. Vietnam

Appendix

The Rights of Prisoners from the Convention Against Torture

1. All prisoners shall be treated, with the respect due, to their inherent dignity and value as human beings.
2. There shall be no discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.
3. It is, however, desirable to respect the religious beliefs and cultural precepts of the group to which prisoners belong, whenever local conditions so require.
4. The responsibility of prisons for the custody of prisoners and for the protection of society against crime shall be discharged in keeping with a State's other social objectives and its fundamental responsibilities for promoting the well-being and development of all members of society.
5. Except for those limitations that are demonstrably necessitated by the fact of incarceration, all prisoners shall retain the human rights and fundamental freedoms set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and, where the State concerned is a party, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol thereto, as well as such other rights as are set out in other United Nations covenants.
6. All prisoners shall have the right to take part in cultural activities and education aimed at the full development of the human personality.

7. Efforts addressed to the abolition of solitary confinement as a punishment, or to the restriction of its use, should be undertaken and encouraged.

8. Conditions shall be created enabling prisoners to undertake meaningful remunerated employment which will facilitate their reintegration into the country's labour market and permit them to contribute to their own financial support and to that of their families.

9. Prisoners shall have access to the health services available in the country without discrimination on the grounds of their legal situation.

10. With the participation and help of the community and social institutions, and with due regard to the interests of victims, favorable conditions shall be created for the reintegration of the ex-prisoner into society under the best possible conditions.

11. The above Principles shall be applied impartially.