

AUS MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

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Introduction

Director's Welcome Letter

Dear delegates,

I am honoured to welcome you to AUSMUN 2024, where you will play an essential role in shaping global discourse about world issues. This year's conference is set to be a platform for innovation, collaboration, and meaningful dialogue. Here we will explore global issues, analyze the complexities of the same, and propose solutions that satisfy the varying perspectives of countries in the international community.

It is important to remember that you think critically, engage in constructive debate, and seek to achieve common ground with your fellow delegates. At AUSMUN, we encourage you to approach this experience with an open mind and a commitment to finding a solution. This conference is not only a simulation but also an opportunity for you to develop skills that benefit your academic, professional, and personal lives. It is a chance to form connections with individuals who share a similar passion for global issues and diplomacy. I encourage you to make the most of this unique experience and to challenge your limits by thinking beyond the ordinary. Together, we will all contribute to the legacy of excellence that AUSMUN is known For.

I look forward to meeting you all and witnessing the remarkable contributions each of you will make to our conference.

Welcome to AUSMUN 2024, and let us embark on this enriching journey together.

Warm regards,

Sarvagya Sharma Director of Research AUSMUN 2024

Moderator's Welcome

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to AUSMUN 2024!

It is with honor and the greatest pleasure that we welcome you all to the seventeenth annual American University of Sharjah Model United Nations Conference (AUSMUN) and specifically to our committee, United Nations Economic and Social Council, also known as ECOSOC.

We, as your chairs, are looking forward to meeting you all and hopefully making the most out of this experience by interacting, communicating, and cooperating efficiently. During this three-day conference we will be discussing the following topics: "Addressing Hyperinflation and Its Socioeconomic Consequences in Lebanon" and "Implications of the collapse of the black sea grain deal on global food prices and food security". We advise that you expand beyond the background guide and conduct your own thorough research regarding both topics, your allocated countries' stance, and capabilities in order to generate fruitful debate during this conference.

MUN conferences are transforming events that develop your diplomatic abilities, promote cross-cultural understanding, and equip you to be productive global citizens. Embrace the chance to engage in meaningful conversation, interact with other delegates, and create enduring relationships that transcend horizons. That being said, we truly hope, and believe, that this year's conference will be a memorable one for both parties. We wish you the best of luck with your preparations and we look forward to meeting you all at AUSMUN 2024.

If you have any inquiries please contact us via email ecosoc1ausmun24@gmail.com for the ECOSOC-1 committee and ecosoc2ausmun@gmail.com for ECOSOC-2. Please send your position papers to the same email addresses as well.

Best Regards,

Chairs of the United Nations Economic and Social Council



Talal Al Badareen is an economics student at the American University in Dubai. He has actively participated in various Model United Nations conferences, including AUSMUN and AUDMUN. His most recent experience involved serving as the chair at SAISMUN and representing his school as an ambassador at the conference. In addition to his involvement in MUN conferences, Talal is passionate about public

speaking and is a TEDx Speaker and organiser. He has delivered compelling speeches at numerous events throughout the UAE. Talal is deeply honoured to be a part of the AUSMUN team and is committed to ensuring that this experience is both enjoyable and unforgettable for all participants.



Currently in the year 13 at Arab Unity School, Sheema Mohamed is a debate enthusiast, a spirited public speaker, and a determined advocate for raising awareness to current world issues.

In addition to having been a delegate a number of times, Sheema has served as the Deputy Secretary General and Chief of Staff at various MUNs as well as a Chair at her school's previous and upcoming AUSchoolMUN conferences, she is beyond honoured and thrilled to Chair the ECOSOC-1 committee here at the seventeenth AUSMUN conference. Sheema is dedicated to creating a rewarding and insightful experience and is looking forward to witnessing some fierce debates!

Lujain Abdulrahim Almaazmi is a dedicated and ambitious first-year International Relations student at the American University of Sharjah. With a profound passion for politics and a clear and unwavering aspiration to become a diplomat, Lujain has set her sights on representing her country, the United Arab Emirates, on the world stage. Her commitment to international affairs and diplomacy has driven her to intern at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and to chair the ECOSOC-2 Committee at the AUSMUN conference of 2024. A graduate of the IB Diploma Program, Lujain has demonstrated her hard work, organisation and responsibility. Her experience as a delegate at two Model United Nations conferences, along with her role as a chair in her school's MUN event two years ago, has enriched her understanding of global politics and diplomatic proceedings. Furthermore, her role as an organiser in the last MUN, where she also dedicated her time to training fellow high school delegates, underscores her leadership and commitment to nurturing the next generation of diplomats and global leaders. Lujain looks forward to driving this conference into a memorable event, with an unforgettable and exciting atmosphere built on passionate and collaborative discussions.



Amr Abu Najem, now a senior in high school, began his journey in public speaking several years ago. His MUN journey, however, began with AUSMUN22', his inaugural conference, and since then, he has delved deeper into the MUN community by participating in numerous events. These engagements have significantly boosted Amr's

confidence, broadened his skill sets, and introduced him to enduring friendships. Beyond the confines of MUN, these acquired skills undoubtedly hold the potential to be instrumental in shaping his future professional and personal paths. Amr is both thrilled and honored to serve as a chair for the ECOSOC-2 committee for AUSMUN24' and is dedicated to ensuring that this experience is not only enriching but also truly memorable for all involved.

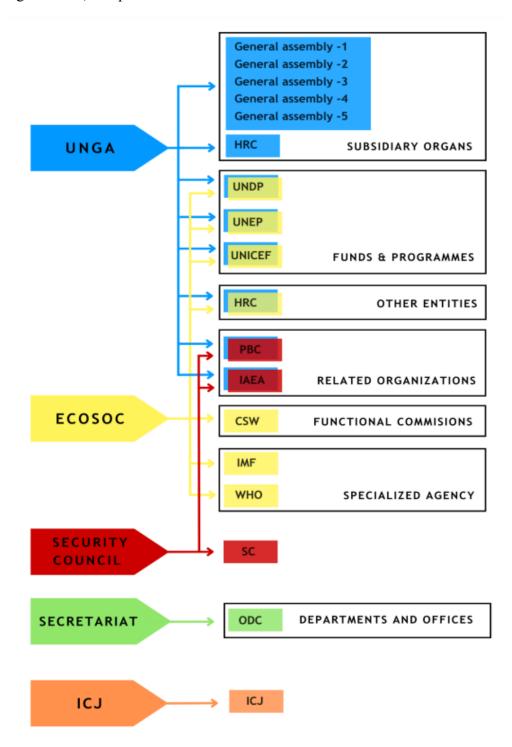
Brief About the Committee

In 1945, the ECOSOC was established. It plays a pivotal role in promoting global economic cooperation and social progress through sustainable development.

Some of its main functions include coordinating worldwide social policies and the advancement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). ECOSOC also serves as a hub for its member states to coordinate global financial policies and business models, civil rights movements, and engagement with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) through consultations. They also facilitate meetings, provide humanitarian aid, conduct economic studies, and promote partnerships for worldwide inclusive development. With 54 member states, ECOSOC's focus on geographic representation allows all countries a voice in policymaking. NGOs play a critical part as they act as the bridge between the UN and civil society. The committee is primarily funded by the United States (US), United Kingdom, Russia, and France - four of the five permanent members of the Security Council. In everything that it does, ECOSOC works towards advancing the UN's vision to address worldwide issues and promote peace and sustainable development in unity.

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This diagram visually represents the UN system and corresponds to AUSMUN. It reflects the relationships between committees and clearly demonstrates the committee's position, significance, and powers as defined under the UN charter.



Function of the Committee

The council plays a significant role in encouraging global development cooperation as the fundamental forum for discussing international economic and social issues. ECOSOC also works with non-governmental organizations through a consultative relationship as a means to preserve an essential link between the United Nations and civil society. To give them the ability to participate in a variety of UN processes, ECOSOC awards consultative status to certain NGOs. This includes allowing them to attend meetings and submit reports. Organizations with consultative status are able to attend regular and special sessions held by ECOSOC, as well as provide their expertise on different economic and social issues. The work of these organizations is monitored and evaluated by the ECOSOC to ensure they remain in line with the UN's principles and goals. Following these procedures, ECOSOC is able to communicate with the civil society.

ECOSOC's work is spread across a plethora of issues requiring it to receive help from commissions. Some of these are known as functional commissions which meet regularly and relay back to it on issues including human rights, crime prevention, and various other topics of concern.

ECOSOC consists of five other regional commissions that further develop economic cooperation within their specified regions: Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) which addresses poverty, sustainable development, and infrastructure in Africa, Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) whose main goal is to promote economic integration and cooperation, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) focuses on poverty reduction, trade and developing the economy, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) addresses a number of social, economic and environmental issues including gender equality, and trade, and finally the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) focuses on social development and economic growth in the middle east and north Africa.

As a whole, ECOSOC was founded to see to the issues of evolving living standards, employment, and economic and social advancement, recognizing solutions to economic, social, and health issues, enabling cultural and educational cooperation; and promoting global esteem for human rights and elemental freedom.

The voting procedure for ECOSOC is followed as per Article 67 of the United Nations charter which states that: "Each member of the Economic and Social Council shall have one

vote." "Decisions of the Economic and Social Council shall be made by a majority of the members present and voting." (UN Charter | United Nations, n.d.)

Topic 1: Addressing Hyperinflation and Its Socioeconomic Consequences in Lebanon

Summary and History

The Republic of Lebanon is currently experiencing one of the most severe cases of hyperinflation in history, drawing global attention. According to Trading Economics data as of August 2023, the country's inflation rate has soared to 229.8%, marking the 38th consecutive month of this crippling crisis (Trading Economies, 2023). This sharp devaluation of a currency causes prices for goods and services to escalate, devastating the nation's economy and society.

Lebanon's crisis has its roots in the country's complex history of economic management, instability, and conflicts. The issue behind Lebanon's current state can be traced back to historical events involving its political system and socioeconomic structure. According to the National News, Lebanon was referred to as the "Switzerland of the Middle East" because of how stable its economy was; however, that changed between 1975 - 1990 due to a civil war that deeply disrupted their economy. After the war ended, the government worked hard to recover devastating effects while also experiencing periods of prosperity, despite this effort, issues persisted in their political and economic systems.

Corruption within the government has made it nearly impossible to effectively manage their population's needs, such as public services. The situation is worsening as the national debt continues to increase at an alarming rate (O'Neill,2023). Syrian refugees immigrating from their country to escape the Syrian civil war are also adding pressure to Lebanon's already struggling economic and social system.

Maintained by the central bank of Lebanon, the pegged exchange rate aided in stabilizing the exchange rate, in turn increasing its predictability and making it an attractive place for foreign investors in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and France.

Issues began when Lebanon's central bank could no longer maintain the peg as their foreign currency reserves started to lessen. This problem was worsened by a banking crisis that saw banks being involved in questionable activities. These activities which included limiting people's access to their own money eventually led to people losing their trust in the financial system and a parallel exchange rate market took flight. Making the value of the Lebanese Pound decrease sharply, which resulted in hyperinflation.

Key Terms Pertaining to the Issue:

Inflation Rate: The rate at which prices rise over a specified time period is known as inflation.

Hyperinflation: Hyperinflation refers to a rapid and significant increase in inflation within a short period of time.

Instability in the Middle East, as a result of ongoing conflicts and political tensions, is further exacerbated by the Lebanese economic crisis as it has led to an increasing number of Lebanese citizens fleeing their country for better job opportunities (Tabbarra, 2022). On a global scale, the crisis highlights that political and economic mismanagement are leading forces in the devastation of financial systems causing social unrest. This social unrest stems from people losing their trust in their own governments, the revolution that occurred following the crisis also led to religious struggle in the parliament and among the people. Fortunately, governments in the region are now working on reforms to prevent such issues from occurring again.

Discourse on the Issue

The hyperinflation in Lebanon contributes to instability in the region and violates Article 13. 1 'The General Assembly shall initiate studies and make recommendations for the purpose of:' b. 'promoting international co-operation in the economic, social, cultural, educational, and health fields, and assisting in the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.' of the UN charter (*UN Charter* | *United Nations*, n.d.)

This situation carries serious implications affecting worldwide affairs. Some of the social implications consist of widespread poverty, food shortages, and protests that were triggered by Lebanon's hyperinflation. This does not just negatively affect the Lebanese people, but neighboring countries as well who must deal with an influx of refugees. In addition to that, there were economic consequences, such as bringing about vulnerabilities in our global financial system to light. It exposed practices that are unsustainable and raised concern from international financial institutions as well as financial markets further threatening the stability of the region's economy. Political stability within Lebanon has also worsened due to this crisis, resulting in the straining of diplomatic relations in the region, which has a direct influence on the global geopolitical dynamics.

Those most affected are the Lebanese people, as they experience the rise in poverty rates and §must operate in a suffering economy. However, the crisis has surpassed the Lebanese borders and has begun to have an impact on the world and even the Middle East. Neighbouring

countries also face new challenges, as they see an increased refugee population and various other complications that are typical of economic turmoil. Major global powers such as the United States and France are not directly affected but still have an interest in maintaining the region's stability.

Past International Organization (IO) Actions & Latest Developments

The Hyperinflation and economic crisis in Lebanon have continued to display severe outcomes, however, several international organizations have stepped in to help mitigate the issue. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) staff has been engaged with the Lebanese authorities in formulating an economic reform program that aims to rebuild the country's economy. There was an agreement on economic policies that would be supported by a 46-month Extended Fund Arrangement with requested access of SDR 2,173.9 million (*IMF Reaches Staff-Level Agreement on Economic Policies With Lebanon for a Four-Year Extended Fund Facility*, 2022)

This plan is dependent on 5 key pillars: Restructuring the banking industry to ensure the survival of banks, putting into practice budgetary changes in addition to the suggested restructuring of the external public debt, Restructuring state-owned businesses, enhancing anti-corruption, anti-money laundering, and governance (fighting financial terrorism) and implementing a reliable and transparent exchange rate and monetary system.

In June 2019, the Board of the World Bank approved 200 million USD to enhance the resiliency of small and medium businesses and farmers in the Lebanese agri-food industry. The Green-Agri Food Transformation for Economic Recovery (GATE) Project will provide funding for worthwhile initiatives that raise production in the agricultural sector and facilitate market access. The new funding offers an integrated support package designed to tackle the difficulties that agri-food SMEs and farmers are encountering as a result of the many crises. Through the restoration of farmers' and agri-food SMEs' access to financing, the project will encourage climate-smart investments in agri-food value chains. (Bjerde, 2023)

The UN first addressed Lebanon's economic and humanitarian crisis in September of 2021. Humanitarian assistance is being provided by various agencies and programs, like the United Nations Development Program and World Food Program which have been very active in providing humanitarian assistance in socio-economic consequences that came from the crisis. This help aimed to reduce the impact of the crisis on vulnerable communities and the goal was to

address their immediate needs, like access to food and healthcare, along with other essential services.

A number of countries worldwide have also offered their help support, including France who played a major part in inter efforts and have also been advocating for economic reforms and financial support. The US has also publicly expressed its concerns about Lebanon's situation and offered support to any effort to aid in the solving of the crisis. Saudi Arabia, along with some other Gulf states has also offered support.

The Economic and Social Committee is the central platform for fostering debate and innovative thinking, forging consensus on ways forward, and coordinating efforts to achieve internationally agreed goals. It is also responsible for the follow-up to major UN conferences and summits. The committee has the authority to enforce reforms that ensure that all countries are advancing in the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social, and environmental.

Questions that the Committee and Resolutions Should Address

- 1. What led to the hyperinflation in Lebanon?
- 2. What socioeconomic effects were faced by the Lebanese people due to the crisis?
- 3. How did the crisis affect Lebanon's diplomatic relations?
- 4. What role did the UN play in addressing and tackling the issue
- 5. What are possible measures that can be taken to ensure future economic stability?

Suggestions for Further Research

- Examine how Europe can help Lebanon overcome its economic implosion
- Explore the role of countries globally in the recovery of Lebanon's economy
- Assess the current socioeconomic situation of Lebanon
- Suggest ways in which the economy of Lebanon can be redeemed
- Investigate the major causes of the downfall of the economy
 - https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/lebanon/overview
- https://arabstates.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2023/06/impact-of-lebanon s-financial-crisis-on-womens-economic-empowerment

Timeline of the Major Events

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Pre-2019- Lebanon's economy was facing challenges such as high public debt, political corruption, and economic mismanagement. The Lebanese pound was pegged to the US dollar with an artificially high exchange rate which led to a growing trade deficit and dependence on foreign remittances.

October 17, 2019- Mass protests erupted due to government plans to tax WhatsApp calls. The protestors were demanding an end to corruption, economic reform, and a change in the political system.

December, 2019- Prime Minister Saad Hariri resigned causing further instability.

January, 2020- Lebanon defaulted on its sovereign debt for the first time.

August, 2020- A massive explosion in Beirut caused widespread devastation that ended up straining the country's resources and capacity to respond to the crisis.

August, 2020- Mustapha Adib was appointed prime minister but later resigned due to political deadlock.

October, 2020- Saad Hariri was put back in office as prime minister.

April, 2021- Lebanon began talking with the IMF for financial assistance but failed because of political divisions.

June, **2021**- Lebanon's central bank put a stop to fuel subsidies, which led to fuel prices going up and economic distress.

September, 2021- Prime Minister Najib Mikati formed a government after a political vacuum that lasted for over a year. His cabinet then resumed talks with the IMF in January of 2022.

April, 2022- After a conditional agreement on a \$3 billion dollar loan package, Lebanon and the IMF reached an agreement to bail out their economy.

September, 2022- Finance Minister Youssef announces that the state will re-peg the dollar from 1,507 to 15,000 pounds.

November, 2022- Lebanon has backed out of plans to lower its official exchange rate that's been stable for 25 years due to fear of backlash from the public.

February, 2023- For the first time in 25 years, Lebanon devalued its official exchange rate by 90%. Setting the new official rate at 15,000 pounds per dollar and leaving the local currency well below its market value.

March, 2023- Lebanon tripled their tariffs, which are used on imports and charged in the local currency in an attempt to boost revenue as their economic crisis worsens.

July, 2023- Riad Salameh's time as governor for Lebanon's central bank comes to an end after 30 years as he is charged with laundering money and embezzlement.

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Topic 2: Implications of the Collapse of the Black Sea Grain Deal on Global Food Prices and Food Security

Summary & History

The Black Sea Grain deal was a negotiation that took place in July of 2022 between Turkey, Ukraine, Russia, and the UN (Wintour, 2023). The aim of this deal was to ensure that Ukrainian grain could continue to leave its southern ports via the Bosphorus (a waterway in Istanbul, Turkey, used for transport and trade), after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February of 2022. During this invasion, the Russian Navy blocked Ukraine's Black Sea ports, trapping 20 million tons of grain for export (BBC, 2023). The grain could not be exported in the quantities required using the alternative methods of road or rail through Poland or by canal and river through Romania. This initiative has gained international attention due to the region's substantial role in the global grain trade and its potential impact on food security worldwide. Since The Black Sea region accounts for a significant share of the world's production of wheat (10%), barley (13%), corn (15%), and sunflower oil (50%) (Eisele, 2022), it was crucial for the nations to develop a plan on how to continue exporting Ukraines grain. This became known as the Black Sea Grain Deal.

Some key Terms Pertaining to the Issue are:

Black Sea Region: Comprising countries such as Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan, this region is a significant global producer of grains, particularly wheat, barley, and corn.

Grain Trade: The international exchange of grains, including their production, distribution, and export, plays a pivotal role in ensuring global food security.

Geopolitical Tensions: Ongoing political conflicts and disputes that can lead to trade restrictions, sanctions, and disruptions in grain exports.

Climate Change: The long-term alteration of weather patterns, including extreme events like droughts and floods, that affect agricultural production and food supply.

The collapse of the Black Sea grain deal was a direct result of Russia's refusal to renew it (BBC, 2023). This collapse has had profound implications on a global scale. It has directly impacted food prices, as the reduced supply from the Black Sea region has the potential to drive up prices in the international grain market. This, in turn, has led to higher food costs for consumers and greater economic strain on countries reliant on grain imports. In addition, food

security is also at risk as many of the world's countries depend on the Black Sea region for their grain supply, therefore their ability to provide food for their population has been jeopardized. "The export volume of cereal grain and grain legumes from Ukraine amounted to nearly 45 million metric tons, of which wheat, flour, and wheat products constituted over 16 million metric tons" (Statista, 2023). A shortage in grain and rice causes tensions in the global grain market, as the supply does not meet the demand. As a result, some European nations, Argentina, and Brazil have begun "producing more grain to counterbalance the loss from Ukraine" (VOA News, 2023).

Discourse on the Issue

The Black Sea Grain Deal has long stood as a stockade of global food security, particularly in the realm of wheat production (United Nations, 2023). The collapse of such an accord doesn't just cause regional economic shifts but also affects global markets, increasing instability in food prices and thereby impacting global food security.

The UN Charter, particularly in the context of international economic cooperation, emphasizes the importance of stabilizing global prices (United Nations, Chapter IX, Article 55). The collapse of the Black Sea Grain Deal could be seen as an infringement upon the principles of the UN Charter since it undermines global economic stability by introducing volatility and uncertainty into global food markets. Moreover, it directly impinges on the UN's SDG 2, which seeks "Zero Hunger" by ensuring access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food all year round, especially for vulnerable populations (United Nations, 2023).

The collapse of the Black Sea Grain Deal has global consequences. These consequences include the destabilization of grain prices and the minimization of export revenues for involved countries. The disruption also threatens food security primarily in developing countries (Glauber & Kim & Olivetti & Vos, 2023), as Ukraine is one of the greatest global suppliers of grain and rice hence causing less availability of such for the nations. The threat of food insecurity causes social unrest. as well as escalating geopolitical tensions, as seen between Russia and the USA.

Past International Organization (IO) Actions & Latest Developments

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization has projected alarming figures in light of the disrupted deal, warning that up to 345 million people could encounter acute food insecurity, and an additional 132 million people could face hunger in 2023, as compared to the previous year (*Black Sea Grain Initiative*, n.d.).

In response to this emerging crisis, the UN has established the Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy, and Finance to coordinate international endeavors aiming to mitigate the crisis. Further, the G7 has committed to extending financial and technical support to Ukraine and other nations impacted by the unfolding crisis. These steps, albeit crucial, underscore the persistent need for further intervention and a consolidated global approach to preclude a profound food crisis. This involves robust investment in agriculture, reformed trade policies, and fortified support for developing nations. In addition to the UN, there have been other major parties acting upon the collapse of the deal. These include the US, the European Union, Turkey, the World Trade Organization, and the WFP. The US and EU have condemned Russia's decision to end the deal and have praised Turkey's diplomatic efforts to revive the deal. Concurrently, the WFP has been sending continuous reports on the effects of the deal's collapse.

In regards to the ECOSOC mandate, it is authorized to devise recommendations and directives on international economic and social matters, as well as on global standards and norms. Pertaining to the issue of the collapse of the Black Sea grain deal and its implications on global food prices and food security, the ECOSOC committee holds the authority to convene discussions, commission research, and propose solutions, but it does not have enforcement abilities.

Questions that the Committee and Resolutions Should Address

- 1. How can countries avoid a drastic rise in global food prices?
- 2. What alternatives are there to the reliance on Ukraine for grain?
- 3. What are possible solutions to protect the citizens of developing countries from food shortages and inability to afford food?
- 4. What alliances /international agreements can be formed to attempt to resolve the collapse of the black sea grain initiative?
- 5. Are there other UN committees that can help with the problems that this collapse has caused? If so, which are they? And how can they help?

Suggestions for Further Research

- Research into why the black sea grain initiative was developed
- Research into why Russia, Ukraine, and Turkey are involved in this initiative
- The other countries also involved in the black sea grain deal
- The ways in which the collapse of the deal is impacting other continents
- The solutions actively being discussed by the UN

- International meetings between countries have been held to discuss resolving this issue
- How has the Russian invasion of Ukraine affected global grain prices (increase /decrease)
- How this invasion caused a spike in global grain prices
- How Russia broke this deal, and why is this seen as a threat internationally
- Black Sea Grain Initiative | Joint Coordination Centre | United Nations it is recommended to watch the video attached on the website, titled "What is the Black Sea Initiative?"
- https://lu.usembassy.gov/world-leaders-call-on-russia-to-rejoin-black-sea-grain-deal/
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aldBuCjymUA

Timeline of the Major Events

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<u>February</u>, 2022 - Russia invades Ukraine

April, 2022 - negotiation between Turkey, Ukraine, and Russia on the Black Sea Grain Initiative

22 July, 2022 - The official signing of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, in Istanbul

<u>17 November, 2022</u> - Statement from the UN Secretary-General on the renewal of the Black Sea Grain Initiative

May 29, 2023 - UN Coordinator discusses the importance of stable, predictable exports out of Ukraine with the League of Arab States

July 15, 2023 - Update from the Office of the UN Coordinator for the Black Sea Grain Initiative

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