

# Modelling the United Nations in Bristol

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ADITI VERMA, NOV 2 2014

A Model United Nations organised by the Politics and International Relations Society (PAIRS) of the University of the West of England, Bristol (UWE), took place during 24-26 October. The topic of discussion was whether sovereignty should be conditional in the face of severe human rights violations. Students from UWE, the University of Bristol, and Sciences Po Bordeaux France were appointed as delegates to various countries to present their views on the matter.

Philip Cole, Senior Lecturer in Politics and International Relations at UWE, opened the three-day event as guest speaker. He provided information on humanitarian intervention and added context to the subject. After the initial introductions, the participants began to get engaged in debate and discussion via moderated and un-moderated 'caucus' as well as General Speakers List each day. They were expected to draft a resolution by the end of the last session on the third day.

Hippolyte Genet, second year Politics and International Relations student at UWE and Undersecretary Co-Chair to the MUN said, "The event matched our expectations, particularly as all the participants including those from outside UWE were quite involved."

The debate was in full swing from the first day. The People's Republic of China was against conditional sovereignty in the case of human rights violations while the United Kingdom was in favour of military intervention when soft power fails. Russia supported conditional sovereignty while the USA expressed conflicting views on the matter.

The entire event saw some interesting discussion between the delegates and was documented on twitter through live tweeting from the UWE PAIRS account. Interesting comments were made by the delegates such as "Terrorism knows no borders" by Syria, "We are not united as we turn a blind eye to failures" by Central African Republic, and "The UN is quite a biased organization" by Russia.

The second day included further debates, more of un-moderated caucuses, and some alliances. The subjects of reforming the UN Security Council along with regional powers also fell under discussion. Note passing was prominent and some allegations flew around as well which had to be brought under control by the Chair. The session ended with some rough work on the resolutions by the delegates.

The third and final day resulted in further discussion, mostly involving un-moderated caucus and General Speakers Lists. Eventually, four resolutions were proposed by the delegations of Sweden, USA, China and Russia (merged), and Pakistan. Amendments were submitted and voted on before the majority decided which resolutions to be passed.

Ultimately, the resolution initially presented by the Pakistani delegation won by majority vote. It emphasized that sovereignty should remain unconditional except in cases of extreme human rights violations such as genocide and war crimes. Moreover, it also said that a UN Security sub-committee should be formed for handling the situation locally before turning to the international committee.

The event proved to be a successful UN Simulation and received a good response. Jack Adamson, a first year Physics student at the University of Bristol said, "I thoroughly enjoyed the UWE MUN as it allowed me to improve

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public speaking and socialize more.” PAIRS are already looking forward to their next UWE MUN in 2015.

*Parts of this post were published in WesternEye – UWE’S Independent Student Newspaper, whose full coverage of the event can be found [here](#).*