

IMUN 2022 Research Report

Historical Security Council - Arrest of Nelson Mandela

The question of guaranteeing personal freedoms in autocratic states

The 1948-1994 period of South Africa's history is known for the racial segregation policy, Apartheid. True to its meaning in Afrikaans, "apartness", this legislative policy was created to effectively govern the segregated races, particularly, the white wealthy minority and the nonwhite majority, perpetuating a regime of political and economic discrimination against all Bantu and Coloured (Apartheid). Following the Population Registration act (1950), which classified the whole population into race-based strata, the Group Areas Act (1950) assigned each particular race to business and residence sectors within the country, later facilitating the prohibition of any social contact between the races (Apartheid)(Early Apartheid). Upon strengthening of the "pass" laws, black commuters fell into the hands of the authorities and black communities had their basic rights as citizens revoked (Apartheid)(Early Apartheid).

Nelson Mandela, born in 1918, joined the African National Congress (ANC) in 1944 participating in multiple protests and organized campaigns against the Apartheid regime (Biography)(Nelson). In 1952, he was charged for his involvement with the Defiance Campaign (Biography). On the 21st of March, 1960, 69 protestors against the pass laws were murdered by the police, initiating a state of emergency which resulted in innumerable arrests, including Mandela, who dropped the nonviolent approach to the issue and helped establish, in 1961, Umkhonto weSizwe (Biography)(Nelson). In early 1962 he left South Africa in an attempt to gain support for the armed struggle, but upon his return he was arrested, on August 5th, and posteriorly sentenced to life in prison (Trials and Prison).

The question of guaranteeing personal freedoms in autocratic states is meant to guide the debate towards drafting a resolution that, if passed, will be put in place mid Apartheid, posterior to Nelson Mandela's arrest. This means that delegates should address any measures that should be put in place to aid current political prisoners, along with new legislation to better regulate how the regime should approach individuals such as Nelson Mandela. Hence, debating the racial segregation in place at the time, with a special emphasis on the UN charter and the UNDHR, and measures to address such policies and regimes (Freedom)(Universal). Furthermore, the debate should also focus on what constitutes an autocratic state, alongside measures to ensure individual's rights are not compromised.

Works Cited

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