

**Committee: Special Political and Decolonization Committee**

**Issue: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples**

**Student Officer: Dioni Ellinikaki**

**Position: Co-Chair**

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Dear Delegates,

My name is Dioni Ellinikaki and it is my pleasure to be the Co-Chair in the Special Political and Decolonization Committee of the 5<sup>th</sup> annual session of the Campion School Model United Nations. Currently, I am in the 11th grade at St Catherine's British School.

This is my second year of being involved in Model United Nations and it is an extra-curricular activity that I really enjoy and wish to continue throughout school. CSMUN will be my 7th conference and I hope it can be a fruitful conference as well as a helpful experience which will motivate all delegates to continue their journey with the activity.

In order for delegates to find solutions which accordingly represent their country's policy and to draft and pass resolutions in the committee, all delegates should have done a significant amount of preparation prior to the conference to make sure the session in the committee will be productive. In this study guide you will find the key facts and information on our topic of 'Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples'. I strongly encourage you to do your own research on the topic, as well as finding your countries policy and stance on colonisation as it varies with each country. Additionally, you should all draft clauses with proposals that represent your country's position on the issue.

I am really excited to work with all of you and if you have any questions regarding the topic or the committee please don't hesitate to contact me on my email, [dioniellinikaki15@gmail.com](mailto:dioniellinikaki15@gmail.com), I will answer immediately and assist you the best I can.

Sincerely,

Dioni Ellinikaki

## **TOPIC INTRODUCTION**

The 'Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples' is a resolution passed by the General Assembly of the United Nation in its fifteenth session which is meant to give the ability to colonies and their population to grant their independence. This is in the case that countries which are not independent (colonies) desire an end to colonialism and become independent. In fact, from the start of the establishment of the UN, in the Charter of The United Nations and Statute of International Court of Justice in 1945, one of its main purposes was "To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate

measures to strengthen universal peace<sup>1</sup>". The phenomenon of colonialism exists 'when a country has partial or full control (mainly political control) over another country. Under colonialism, the coloniser exploits their colonies as well as its population to generate income which benefits itself<sup>2</sup>. Because of this many inhabitants of a colony were forced in the system of indentured labourers. Land and resources of the colony are exploited by the coloniser and the coloniser's traditions and values are passed onto the colony while the coloniser asserts their racial and cultural superiority over the inferior native majority. Modern colonialism initially began in the 15th century, when the Portuguese were travelling along the west coast of Africa which led Vasco da Gama to discover India. Colonisation still exists in the status quo, with several areas around the world still not being independent. The UN General Assembly designated a list of the last colonies, the 16 "non-self-governing territories". Complete independence is still hard to establish, even though the United Nations continue to petition for complete sovereignty between all nations. In this study guide the focus will be on modern colonialism.

### DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

#### Colonialism

'The extension of a country's sovereignty, which is outside its borders and usually overseas by establishing settler colonies or administrative dependencies in which the native population is ruled or displaced. When the coloniser colonises a colony, its resources, labour, markets are dominated. Often socio-cultural, linguistic and religious changes are imposed on the population of the colony.'<sup>3</sup>

#### Independence

'Freedom from the control, influence, support, aid, or the like, of others.'<sup>4</sup>

#### Self-determination

'The processes in which a country determines its own statehood and forms its own government.'<sup>5</sup>

#### Exploitation

'The action or fact of treating someone unfairly in order to benefit from their work..<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "UNITED NATIONS CHAPTER I: PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES." (n.d.): n. pag. Un.org. Web.

<sup>2</sup> Nowell, Charles E., Harry Magdof, and Richard A. Webster. "Colonialism, Western." (n.d.): n. pag. Britannica.com. Web.

<sup>3</sup> "Colonialism." New World Encyclopedia, . 5 Jun 2013, 18:52 UTC. 10 Aug 2017, 16:16

<sup>4</sup> "independence". Dictionary.com Unabridged. Random House, Inc. 10 Aug. 2017. <[dictionary.com](http://dictionary.com)

<sup>5</sup> "Definition of self-determination in English:." (n.d.): n. pag. En.oxforddictionaries.com. Web.

<sup>6</sup> "Exploitation." Merriam-Webster.com. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 26 Aug. 2017.

## Natural resources

‘Materials or substances occurring in nature which can be exploited for economic gain.’<sup>7</sup>

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Colonialism in Africa

Colonialism in Africa is the most significant example of modern colonisation. European leaders wanted to secure colonies where they would gain resources by exploiting them, which would help their economy flourish. There were political, economic and religious motives behind the colonisation of Africa. Germany, France, Great Britain, Belgium and other countries had fallen into an economic depression and exploiting the raw material and resources of the unexploited continent, could help their markets and economies flourish. They took materials such as wood, cotton, ivory, oil, and gum for making paper and palm oil. They also used natives for cheap labour in order to exploit these resources faster and more cheaply. As the use of industrial and mechanical means in production of goods and the progress of the industrial revolution in Europe, the goods were even more valuable. African markets were set up by Europeans which produced more commerce. Another reason was that there was a rivalry between European countries, like Britain and France, wanting to out-do each in who had the most power and influence, through colonies. Every country wanted to be the most powerful, and an effective way of doing this was through colonising these countries. This had both positive and negative social, political and economic effects on the colonised countries. Christianity was introduced by the Europeans, which gave the opportunity of education in Africa as many missionaries came from the West. The colonisers also protected the native population from their enemies, brought new technologies, tools, new farming methods and crops. They built hospitals, transport means, communication networks, schools and crop plantations. Africans learned the language of their colonial masters, which is evidence of the outcomes of colonialism today, as many citizens of African countries which used to be colonised, speak the language of their coloniser within their communities and among themselves. Jobs were created for the African population and better government institutions were developed, some of them still existing today. Western influence heavily altered the culture and traditions of the natives and they non-voluntarily had to adapt to these drastic changes being made in society by outsiders. On the other hand, native Africans were non-voluntarily taken as slaves, in areas such as the United States, working in plantations, under horrible conditions, without pay and where treated like animals. Europeans forced Africans

Figure 1: African territories and their colonisers



<sup>7</sup> "Definition of natural resources in English:." (n.d.): n. pag. En.oxforddictionaries.com. Web.

out of their land as they seized it for farming and for growing their plantations and forced the African people that lived on these areas to work on their plantations. African culture faded, traditions and everyday life changed. The distinct identity of their traditions and cultures was lost. One of the aspects of traditions that faded because of Western influence was religion. African traditional religion that varied from tribe to tribe was lost as Europeans enforced Christianity, forced the people to learn their language and forced them to follow their way of

life. Europeans took most of the natural raw resources in African land and kept all the profit they received from them for themselves. Africans were left with very few resources and not knowing how to use them for their own benefit. They had no say in their own country's way of governing as they only were allowed to take inferior positions in the administration of the country. As seen on the map below, the colonisers separated the nations and set clear borders between them. Europe's arbitrary post-colonial borders left Africans bunched into countries that don't represent their heritage, a problem they still face today. When European colonialism collapsed in the Africans resumed control of their own continent, and the leaders of the African nations agreed to keep the borders that were set by the European colonisers. The borders did not represent the nations rightly but they were kept because new rulers in Africa made the decision to keep the borders drawn by former colonisers to avoid disruptive conflict amongst themselves.<sup>8</sup>



Figure 1: A map of African nation with the dates of independence of each nation

### Decolonisation of Africa and Results

After World War II, African countries desperately wanted to be granted of their independence, so talks of independence were organised and the two main colonial powers responded. Making the transition from colonised to independent was harder for some countries than others. Some forgot how their way of living was before the colonial powers imposed themselves on them, making the transition to independence more violent which resulted to problems such as the constant change of power, instability in the government of the countries, civil war and poverty. Even the colonial powers that did not respond to the demand of the nation for independence, gave independence to their colonies as they had no match to them because nationalism and the sense of identity was rising and gaining strength. By the start of the 1970's, almost all African nations were independent.

COUNTRY	INDEPENDENCE DAY	PRIOR RULING COUNTRY
Liberia, Republic of	26 July 1847	
South Africa, Republic of	31 May 1910	Britain
Egypt, Arab Republic of	28 February 1922	Britain
Ethiopia, People's Democratic Republic of	5 May 1941	Italy

<sup>8</sup>Fisher, Max. "The Dividing of a Continent: Africa's Separatist Problem." Theatlantic.com, 10 Sept. 2012.

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Libya (Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)	24 December 1951	Britain
Sudan, Democratic Republic of	1 January 1956	Britain
Morocco, Kingdom of	2 March 1956	France
Tunisia, Republic of	20 March 1956	France
Ghana, Republic of	6 March 1957	Britain
Guinea, Republic of	2 October 1958	France
Cameroon, Republic of	1 January 1960	France
Senegal, Republic of	4 April 1960	France
Togo, Republic of	27 April 1960	France
Mali, Republic of	22 September 1960	France
Madagascar, Democratic Republic of	26 June 1960	France
Congo (Kinshasa), Democratic Republic of the	30 June 1960	Belgium
Somalia, Democratic Republic of	1 July 1960	Belgium
Benin, Republic of	1 August 1960	France
Niger, Republic OF	3 August 1960	France
Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of	5 August 1960	France
Cote d'Ivoire, Republic of (Ivory Coast)	7 August 1960	France
Chad, Republic of	11 August 1960	France
Central African Republic	13 August 1960	France
Congo (Brazzaville), Republic of the	15 August 1960	France
Gabon, Republic of	17 August 1960	France
Nigeria, Federal Republic of	1 October 1960	Britain
Mauritania, Islamic Republic of	28 November 1960	France
Sierra Leone, Republic of	27 April 1961	Britain

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Tanzania, United Republic of	9 December 1961	Britain
Burundi, Republic of	1 July 1962	Belgium
Algeria, Democratic Republic of	3 July 1962	France
Uganda, Republic of	9 October 1962	Britain
Kenya, Republic of	12 December 1963	Britain
Malawi, Republic of	6 July 1964	Britain
Zambia, Republic of	24 October 1964	Britain
Gambia, Republic of The	18 February 1965	Britain
Botswana, Republic of	30 September 1966	Britain
Lesotho, Kingdom of	4 October 1966	Britain
Mauritius, State of	12 March 1968	Britain
Swaziland, Kingdom of	6 September 1968	Britain
Equatorial Guinea, Republic of	12 October 1968	Spain
Guinea-Bissau, Republic of	24 September 1973 (alt. 10 September 1974)	Portugal
Mozambique, Republic of	25 June 1975	Portugal
Cape Verde, Republic of	5 July 1975	Portugal
Comoros, Federal Islamic Republic of the	6 July 1975	France
Sao Tome and Principe, Democratic Republic of	12 July 1975	Portugal
Angola, People's Republic of	11 November 1975	Portugal
Seychelles, Republic of	29 June 1977	France
Djibouti, Republic of	27 June 1977	Britain
Zimbabwe, Republic of	18 April 1980	Britain
Namibia, Republic of	21 March 1990	South Africa
Eritrea, State of	24 May 1993	Ethiopia

### Colonisation in the Middle East

Because of the failure of modernisation reforms and corrupt rulers, the Ottoman Empire's declining power left the Middle East in a dysfunctional state. This left the region very

vulnerable to any European attempt for control. Europeans had always displayed a keen interest on the vast oil fields that were present in much of the Middle East. Control of oil was very important to the industry and manufacturing that Europe's economy was based upon. This most likely was a very tempting reason to invade the oil- rich region in its weakened state.



*Figure 2: European colonisers settling in the Middle East*

The European powers always showed an interest in the vast oil fields that were present in much of the Middle East. Controlling this oil would be very beneficial to the industry and manufacturing that Europe's economy was based upon. They also had such an interest in the Middle East due to their strategic location which served both commercial and military purposes in Europe. It served as both an economic and political base to extend their boundaries and their power in the world.

The Europeans were able to extract oil from the ground more efficiently because of new technologies invented during the Industrial Revolution. Middle Eastern Muslims were torn by how much they should change their traditional custom in order to modernise and be equal to the West, and they didn't know whether to reject Western customs, embrace them, or retain a bit of both cultures.

Countries like Britain that controlled eleven colonies, France that controlled two, the Netherlands that controlled two, Portugal that controlled six and Russia that controlled three benefited greatly from this as it gave them control over important trade routes on the Mediterranean. They also wanted control over potential markets for manufactured goods and access to raw materials. Control over such a valuable region in would give the West not only expanded borders and power but also resources that would be channelled directly to the European countries in order to expand its economy. Finding raw materials would be beneficial to industrial factories in the mother countries and new potential markets would bring new sources of income once they sold their manufactured goods.

After these countries colonised the Middle-Eastern territories, the colonial borders remained the same, only now they exist as separated nations because the colonies felt like they were united and did not want to lose their national pride by splitting up the colony. The Suez Canal remained an important strategic location for both military and commercial interests, because its location providing access to the Mediterranean Sea and its position near multiple powers. The industrialised countries in Europe were in a constant need of oil, but the

European countries could no longer control oil production and had to pay high prices for the oil, which brought the Middle Eastern nations a great amount of profit.

### Decolonisation

Colonies gained their independence because they resented European control and wanted to govern themselves. This ended the great European empires and confined direct European control to their home countries. A strong nationalist sentiment rose, which was opposed to foreign control. The ideal of autonomy was spread during the second half of the 19th century by organisation such as the National Party in Egypt, the Young Ottomans and the Young Turks in the Ottoman Empire, secret Arab societies in Beirut and Damascus, and the Young Tunisians. During the start of the twentieth century, these groups began to organise demonstrations which were against foreign control, with some directly challenging the rule of Britain, France and the Ottoman Turks. Arab nationalism became very popular among intellectuals in areas such as Greater Syria. Turkish nationalism also became popular and developed its own new ideas.

The old Ottoman Empire broke up into several smaller states including Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Palestine, part of which became Israel in 1948. Each country wanted to have its own national identity and be different from surrounding nations. For example, Turkey ended Islam's public role and instituted many cultural reforms in order to form a distinct Turkish culture. Israel was split apart from Palestine in order to provide a homeland for the Jews; however, it resulted in conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians, over which pieces of land should belong to which country, such as the Arab- Israeli War, the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War.

## MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

### United Kingdom

The British Empire was at its peak in 1922 when it governed more than a fifth of the world's population and more than a quarter of the world's total area (land). The empire is often criticised for its policy which included causing millions of deaths from famine in British India, the detention camps it had set up in territories of occupation as well as the massacre of thousands of civilians by imperial troops. British leaders have different opinions on the British Empire and its legacy. Tony Blair, in 2006, openly apologised for the empire's role in slave trade and described it as a 'crime against humanity'. On the other hand, Mr Cameron has a different stance on the issue and refused to apologise for the atrocities committed by the empire. The United Kingdom has the most official colonies right now, with 11 out of the 16 colonies belonging to it, as declared by the United Nations General Assembly.

### France

In the 1950s, France was not able to organise a smooth process of decolonisation which led to wars, for example in the case of Algeria, its war of independence lasted for 8 years, from 1954 to 1962. Almost all former French colonies were granted of their independence by the start of 1960 but a few overseas territories are still remaining to be a part of France. Particularly Algeria, as well as other former colonies have demanded for their



citizens to be able to immigrate in France and this is evident as there is a large population of immigrants from Western Africa and Algeria in French cities.

### African countries

All African countries, except of Liberia and Ethiopia have seen some effects of colonialism throughout history. The process of their decolonisation for some of the countries was violent, and for others it was peaceful. The colonisation of these countries has shaped what they are today, but has also caused many wars in these regions as these nations wanted their independence but did not know how to run a country, because the colonisers were always in control.

### Western Sahara

Western Sahara is Africa's last colony and has had a struggle for self-determination which has led to violent conflict as well as passive resistance. The UN had promised a referendum in 1991 after a ceasefire but it did not happen, after Polisario and Rabar, two significant leaders in the country could not agree on who was entitled to vote. It is desperately trying to gain its independence and has even tried putting pressure on Morocco by addressing the European Court on an agreement that concerns agricultural products.

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT
1880	Small areas of the African continent were still under European rule
1910	South Africa becomes independent
1913	Europeans had now 'carved' official boundaries for their 40 new African colonies
1920	A movement called Pan-Africanism had been nourishing nationalist movements in Africa for awhile. Pan-Africanism emphasized the unity of Africans and people of African descent all over the world.
1946	Independence across the African colonies began with four African countries - Liberia, South Africa, Egypt, and Ethiopia - gained their independence by this year.
1948	South Africa had an official policy of apartheid where segregation was present on the grounds of race. Blacks were to be separated from Whites in every way while continuing Africans' labor power in their white-controlled economy.
1950	World War II ended and the destruction caused by it left the European countries no longer interested or able to rule their African colonies. This is when African countries began to gain their own independence.

1960	1960 was named 'the year of Africa' as 17 territories in the continent gained their independence from European colonial rule. These nations also joined the United Nations and were able to voice their concerns internationally.
1963	Kenya became an independent state, after being rocked by the Mau Mau rebellions against British rule.
1966	Ghana was the first African state to emerge from colonial rule. Kwame Nkrumah led the nation until he was overthrown in this year by a police-army coup. Since then, Ghana has had its independence, although democracy is somewhat unstable today

### RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1654 : This resolution was made in the 27th of November in 1961 and is titled "The situation with regard to the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples". Its role was to provide immediate steps to be taken for the implementation of the resolution on the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1541 : This resolution was done in the 15th of December in 1960 and was titled "Principles which should guide members in determining whether or not an obligation exists to transmit the information called for under Article 73e of the Charter". It gave 12 principles that affirmed that to ensure decolonisation, there must be absolute compliance with the principle of self-determination

### ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THIS ISSUE

Officially, there are 16 countries, islands and areas which are dependent on their coloniser. In the case of West Sahara, which is under the jurisdiction of Morocco, the United Nations has argued for negotiations between Morocco and the Polisario Front. It has approved more than 100 resolutions which support the right of self-determination of the Sahrawi people. The UN has also tried to hold a referendum through the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, which has not taken place. Other countries like Bermuda, that were given a referendum on whether it should become independent, and the majority vote was against independence.

There were peaceful and violent transitions to independence. In the example of Algeria, in order to gain its independence the Algerian War broke out and lasted for 8 years, between Arab Nationalists and the French military, until the French withdrew from Algeria and it became independent in 1962. On the other hand the example of India and Pakistan which became independent from the British Empire when they signed an agreement with the

UK and other relevant actors from the regions in 1947. This was completely authorised by the British government, and there was no vote on the matter.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

For every country, the situation is different and there are several factors and context which determine how it can gain its independence. However, there are two main ways for a country to gain its independence.

### **Consent of coloniser**

Firstly, it is by getting the consent of its coloniser. This can be achieved by an agreement between the central government and representatives of the country which wants its independence. For example, representatives of regional groups, revolutionary groups or through a referendum which is held democratically in which the population will have the chance to express its view. The role of the United Nations is also really significant, as it has the power to promote such activities.

### **Without the consent of its coloniser**

Secondly, it can grant its independence without the consent of its coloniser. This usually results in conflict and other negative consequences, but in some cases, has been effective for countries wanting their independence. This can happen if the authority of the coloniser is ignored and the region just becomes independent. This is known as a unilateral declaration of independence, where the dependent region grants its own independence. This can happen if the government of the region declares their own independence by an unauthorised referendum. The status of the now independent region will be disputed by its former coloniser or parent country, sometimes in an international level and can even cause long and disastrous wars.

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