

# Team 33 – Affirmative Constructive

On the Topic, “Resolved: When in conflict, a nation's self-interest should outweigh its international commitments to migrants.”

## Introduction: A Historical Pattern

From archaic compacts such as the peace treaty of Rameses II and the Hittites (Langdon and Gardiner) to modern conflict such as immigration issues at the southern border of the United States (“Stopping Illegal Immigration”), the maintenance of the precarious balance between commitments to migrants and internal self-interest has been a prevalent issue for nation-states throughout history. In more recent times, these issues have defined political discourse and have even swung the outcomes of elections in significant nation-states. Currently, the world faces an unusually large migrant crisis: refugees and economic migrants roam the world in unprecedented numbers (“Refugees”). These refugees flee from calamities, ranging from open war immigration in Syria (“World Report 2019”) to financial pressure in El Salvador and Guatemala (O’Connor et al.). If this ever-increasing migration—legal or illegal, economic or for refuge—is not addressed, the nation-state will find survival in a new world order increasingly difficult. Thus, the state needs to make a fundamental choice: should the nation be protected at any cost, or should it sacrifice itself for a precarious international order, attempting to honor its commitments at any price?

## Framework

Any international commitment to migrants is fundamentally bound by a clear set of parameters: monetary reserves, military power, international prestige, and the political capital of the current authority. No government, authoritarian or democratic, can act according to these

constraints while continuing to work in its self-interest. Therefore, long-lasting international commitment either significantly harms the nation or is simply impossible. Furthermore, actions in the self-interest of a nation's citizens are beneficial to the state as a whole. Governmental measures that increase citizens' economic welfare are directly correlated with widely accepted metrics of human progress. Improvement of societal development in every individual polity improves the human condition in aggregate, implying that actions in the self-interest of the state are beneficial not only to the nation itself but also to the international community at large. Therefore, the affirmative evaluates the round under the criterion of maximizing global welfare, thus resulting in maximizing individual utility in the global sphere, while the negation must defend a world in which the nation-state is forced to overextend itself both at home and abroad, leading to global chaos and a breakdown of the societal order.

Based on the reasons presented, and for the good of the nation-state, we stand in Affirmation of the 2019-2020 IPPF Resolution.

## **Definitions**

For clarity, the following definitions of conflict, self-interest, international commitment, and migrant are offered. Conflict is defined in this resolution's context, as any time when a trade-off is required between a nation's self-interest and its international commitments to migrants (Andreyeva and Ilievski). The self-interest of a nation is expressed in any action in which the net utility of the nation increases, given that the rights of other individuals within the nation are not infringed upon (Frohlich). An international commitment is defined as any formal declaration of intent from a head of state or plenipotentiary thereof, regarding affairs not explicitly limited to the domestic sphere (Woolaver). A migrant is defined as any person who moves voluntarily across the

boundaries of a nation and intends to become a permanent resident of the nation which they entered into (“Migrant/Migration”).

## **Contention 1: The Inability to Commit**

### Subpoint A: The Nature of Democratic Governments

International commitments are, by definition, between multiple nations, and a true multinational agreement hopes to achieve significant progress on an issue despite incorporating nations of varying political systems and ideologies. However, the suitability of any political system to fully enforce international commitments is under serious question.

Under a democratic government, the citizens of the state regularly replace their leaders in response to social and economic needs and desires. This continuous upheaval results in constant changes in priorities, thus removing any hope for stable governments to have concrete policies over long periods of time. In April 2016, for example, the United States adopted the landmark Paris Agreement on climate change under one administration, then immediately withdrew in June 2017 under a different one (Shear). Within a mere 14 months, the policy priorities of the United States had shifted so dramatically that a significant international compact was aborted entirely, despite the signatories and withdrawers of the agreement both being elected by the same body of citizens.

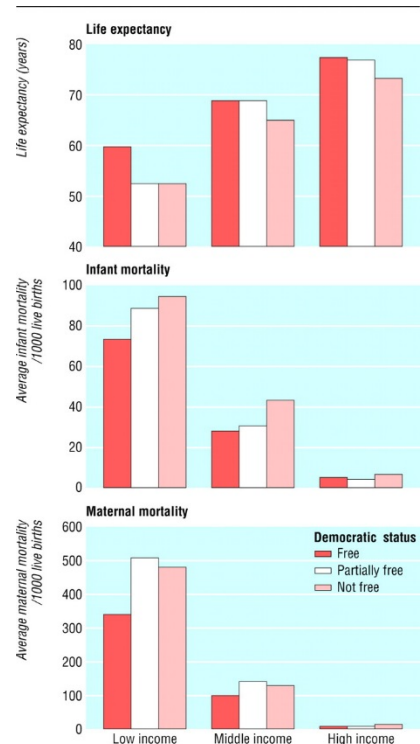
Moreover, the topic of migrants is one that is particularly fraught in democratic nation-states. Such division causes nations to be especially unable to maintain commitment to this issue. Belgium, for instance, committed itself to the landmark UN Compact on Migrants. Like many other European nations, Belgium relies heavily on coalitions of multiple parties with diverse goals, political priorities, and ethnic and linguistic compositions (Toharudin). As a result of Belgium’s

agreement to this compact, a key coalition partner announced its intention to quit the government. Within a week, the prime minister resigned and committed to holding new elections (Smyth). International commitment therefore completely demolished a previously successful governing coalition, engendering political instability and resulting in voter dissatisfaction. Such a scenario is entirely possible in any of the many nations with non-dominant political parties. In a stable, functioning, liberal democracy, international commitments are always under the threat of the ballot box, a surprising fact that reveals international commitments to be both unenforceable and illiberal.

#### Subpoint B: The Deficiencies and Dependencies of Authoritarian Nations

Authoritarian forms of government, of course, have no need to consider public opinion and are thus poised to align policy objectives for more extended periods of time (Puddington). Although such regimes are politically capable of enforcing an international compact, their economic states are significantly worse than those of liberal regimes. If a nation is willing to enforce but unable to do so, it has no credibility in any international commitment. Authoritarian nations have significantly lower life expectancies and health outcomes than freer nations (Franco et al.). Authoritarian nations are also more likely to fall into economic downswings, and it is significantly more difficult for such nations to recover from them (Bellinger and Son). Such logic applies to all forms of authoritarianism, from the nuclear brinkmanship of Kim Jong Un's DPRK to Viktor Orban's comparatively mild Hungarian illiberalism ("How"). In the former case, a loose cannon regime cannot possibly be counted on to enforce commitment. North Korea's entire diplomatic model rests on a philosophy that does not exist—Juche—which no North Korean can define, but on which the North Korean regime's foreign policy perspectives rest almost entirely (Democratic People's Republic of Korea). Faced with such an international actor, the global community at large finds North Korea an irresponsible provocateur at best and an incoherent foe

at worst. In the latter case, an illiberal democracy also cannot be trusted in an international commitment. Hungary resolutely refused to abide by European migration rules, constructed a giant fence around large portions of its border, and backslid from being a free country to a partially free one (Puddington). Another increasingly undemocratic state, Turkey, attempts to declare elections invalid (promptly rigging any re-vote if the result goes the “wrong” way), clamps down on dissidents abroad, and commits acts bordering on genocide (“Benzer et al.”). Such regimes have far worse economies than their more liberal counterparts and are increasingly uncooperative in world affairs. Thus, they cannot be relied upon to enforce international commitments: they have too many domestic problems, and each holds the status of international pariah.



Even comparatively prosperous authoritarian regimes are ill-equipped to commit to international ventures. Most prosperous authoritarians, like Saudi Arabia and Qatar, are supremely dependent on natural resources and commodities (Gamal). A hit in the market value of crude oil, for instance, would cripple both economies immediately. Authoritarian regimes not dependent on natural commodities, such as Singapore, are dependent on the prosperity of other more democratic states in the world economy (Curran). A global economic downturn would result in an immediate depression for such countries. For a relatively diversified authoritarian economy, such as China, problems come from the lack of a true middle white-collar class and the proliferation of bad debt

Authoritarian nations have lower life expectancies and higher mortalities (Franco et al.).

(Lee). The domestic economic instability that is inherent in an authoritarian regime prevents long-lasting and effective commitments.

For the reasons outlined above, no governmental system is adept at international commitment. Maintaining it for sustained periods of time is neither feasible nor desirable.

## **Contention 2: Global Benefits of Prioritizing Self-Interest**

### Subpoint A: Self-Interest and Economic Stability

A nation's duty is to act in the self-interest of its constituents. By raising the net utility of the nation, all citizens ultimately benefit. In the long run, small benefits to constituents of every individual nation result in a global increase in prosperity, thus upholding the international community and eliminating a key push-factor of migration.

For example, free trade has recently come under fire from the radical wings of both leftist and rightist political thought. However, free trade ultimately provides benefits to all participants (Boudreaux and Ghei). For consumers, a greater variety of better quality goods exists at more competitive prices, which stimulates universal wealth. For producers, long-term competition forces innovation and ensures that stagnation can never be an acceptable state. Misguided tariffs and other protectionist policies value the short-term and throw the future to the wind (Torry). Though in the short term domestic manufacturers benefit, consumers get lower quality goods at higher prices, and producers have no incentive to progress, technologically or otherwise. A shift to a free-trade based policy, therefore, is conducive to the self-interest of all nations. Countries with lower total tariffs have higher scores on the UN Human Development Index ("Human Development Reports") than countries that erect hefty taxes on foreign competition ("Tariff Rate").

Adam Smith's idea of the invisible hand, which states that allowing independent free trade allows citizens to act fully in their self-interest, is clearly demonstrated in the above example, leading to societal benefits for all members of the market. In other words, the self-interest of citizens is the driver of a thriving economy (Smith). This concept is not only seen in tariffs: other inhibitors of free trade in generally free markets are shown only to worsen the economy. For instance, in response to a significant increase in the price of oil during the early 1970s, the United States approved market regulation on gasoline, forcing gas stations to sell at an artificially low price. It is also worth noting that the price increase was a direct result of an international commitment: the United States support of Israel during the Yom Kippur War triggered an OPEC oil embargo, which attacked the national interest ("Gas & Oil Prices"). These price controls led to a significant shortage, as producers refused to sell oil at an artificially low price. Long queues at gas stations across the US followed, and presidential approval plummeted (Kohut). As they are unable to set a price that maximizes their profits, suppliers are unable to act in their self-interest, and the economy of the nation suffers.

The recent conflict between the United States and China over economic issues perfectly demonstrates the errors of inhibiting mutually beneficial trade. Since President Trump has levied tariffs on various Chinese goods, the Chinese have retaliated, heavily taxing American corn and soybeans (Schoen). As expected, American farmers are unable to find Chinese buyers for suddenly significantly more expensive produce. Thus, a protectionist policy caused significant economic harm to the same producers that it attempted to safeguard.

#### Subpoint B: Self Interest and the Political Process

Acting in the national self-interest extends beyond theoretical economics: it also includes allowing citizens to choose their nation's fate, making them impassioned stakeholders in a state's

fight for political and economic relevance. When the government fails to grant their citizens these fundamental rights, the nation's stability immediately deteriorates. For example, the Egyptian authoritarian regime under Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has recently killed, imprisoned, and exiled hundreds of thousands of people who did not agree with government policy. Egypt's security forces have locked up groups labeled dissidents, and courts have handed down mass death sentences (Al-Arian). Poverty and inequality are on the rise with 30 percent of Egypt's population below the poverty line—an increase from 24.3 percent rate five years prior. There are also striking geographical variations in poverty rates, ranging from a low of about 7 percent in Port Said governorate to a high of 66 percent in some governorates in Upper Egypt (“World Bank”). Under such a regime, the citizens lose any form of governmental influence, leading the country to lose any sense of a political and economic foundation. The diminishing economy and increasing oppression illustrates that nations which disallow citizens to project their own self-interest are less productive and more chaotic, leading to greater international instability.

International chaos and economic depression results in the lowering of standards of living, particularly in countries already in the grips of pervasive poverty. Since a lack of economic opportunity is a critical factor in pushing migration, acting in self-interest decreases migration leading to a lesser need for international commitment altogether.

### **Conclusion: A Clear Decision**

If international commitment is unenforceable and undesirable in all forms of government, and if actions in self-interest directly benefit nations, then it should be clear that when the two options conflict, a nation should undoubtedly opt for self-interest. Perhaps more importantly,



arguments in the negation fail to fully appreciate either of these characteristics, leading to misconstrued paradigms and broken logic.

The most immediate and poignant argument for the enforcement of international commitment is one that centers on morality: are we not morally obligated to assist our fellow human beings, who are less fortunate and deserving of help? This argument is quite persuasive, but it ignores an essential part of the resolution. Firstly, assisting migrants, particularly skilled ones or ones that can contribute to the nation economically, is likely in the nation's self-interest. Sending a rescue party to assist a boat of stranded nuclear physicists is much more than moral charity: it is an expression of national self-interest. Thus, moralistic arguments ignore the resolution's crucial qualifier, "when in conflict," because they fail to take into account that some moral actions are also in alignment with the national self-interest.

On the other hand, if the migrants in question are unskilled or cannot help the nation as readily, saving such migrants becomes an exercise in prestige building and soft power projection, as a state demonstrates that it has the resources to save unfortunate people far from its sovereign borders. Thus, a morality-based argument is quite reductive: it is either an expression of self-interest or a booster of prestige. It is important to note that moral obligation to a specific task only applies if the task is possible for that nation. No single nation has the "obligation" to solve world hunger and climate change at once, as no nation can do so. The resolution's use of the word "should" implies a moral obligation, but by the prior logic, no such obligation is both feasible and moral at once.

The negation may also turn to a security-based argument. If all nations uphold a commitment, then would not the world as a whole become more stable and prosperous? Such an argument is accurate at the most basic level of analysis, but the historical record paints an entirely

different picture. A nation focused on external commitment is unable to muster enough resources to reinforce the home front. This leads to domestic instability and chaos, which decreases security. Perhaps the best example of such an occurrence is Iran under the last Shah, Mohammed Pahlavi. Pahlavi pursued liberalizing reforms and transformed Iran into an industrial powerhouse, primarily to ingratiate Iran with western nations. He did so without consulting the vast majority of his subjects and disregarded deeply held cultural beliefs. As a reaction to this modernization, radical Islamists under Ayatollah Khomeini staged a coup and overthrew the government (Gambrell). At present, Iran is an Islamic theocracy that pursues nuclear weapons and destabilizes the Middle East region. The direct result of prioritization of external commitments over internal well-being led, in the long term, to a tremendous destabilization of the world security situation. Overall, arguments regarding security prioritize the short term to the complete detriment of the long term.

This resolution is fundamentally a question of prioritization. Should the nation consider the needs of its citizens as its primary imperative, or should it force itself to abide by commitments which it cannot feasibly accomplish? Should a nation lean into actions that increase the welfare of its citizens, thereby increasing world prosperity in aggregate, or should it neglect domestic priorities and provoke instability at home and abroad? Should the state feel morally obligated to accomplish a Sisyphean task, or can it safely refuse to honor an impossible commitment? The answers to these questions are clear. The state should consider itself and its wellbeing, improve the living standard of its constituents first, and consider feasibility over an empty moral argument, all of which lead to a maximization of global prosperity. Therefore, we strongly affirm that when in conflict, the nation should prioritize self-interest over international commitments to migrants.

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# Team 34 – Negative Constructive

## *Introduction*

The renowned jurist Friedmann once responded to Dean Acheson on his point about the importance of national interest “What distinguishes the contemporary problem from that of previous centuries is the desperate urgency of the human condition... ‘Cooperate or perish’ is a stark fact, not an evangelistic aspiration.” (Friedmann)

We firmly stand on the ground that international commitments to migrants should outweigh whatever narrow national self-interest might be.

We agree with the affirmative on the premise that a nation’s sovereignty and development are important, however, we believe that narrowly prioritizing these two principles without regard to international cooperation and moral obligation will be harmful.

We believe in the primacy of international law. Indeed, the voluntary subjugation to international law is the ultimate manifestation of a nation’s sovereignty, as only a truly sovereign actor can relinquish a part of its sovereignty. This is the basic tenet of international relations. Only when nations adhere to their international commitments can they expect others to do the same.

When human life is in danger, when millions of migrants have their lives and livelihoods at stake, we believe that nations must ensure the livelihoods of every person without discrimination.

In this paper we will refute the arguments brought by the affirmative team and we will proceed to prove that only through upholding the commitment to international law will nations be able to prosper in three substantive arguments:

1. International commitment to migrants must be upheld;



2. Migration is conducive to economic growth;

3. Breaking the international commitments toward migrants will negatively affect the international standing of the offending nation.

### **Argument I. International commitment to migrants must be upheld**

1. Primacy of international law.

“The right of entering into international engagements is an attribute of State sovereignty” (S.S.Wimbledon). This means that international affairs of a nation or fulfilling its duties according to the international law are crucial to sovereignty. We frame this motion as a discussion of whether states should abide by the commitments that they made freely in the exercise of their full sovereignty. Therefore, whenever we talk about obligations we mean that (i) the country acceded to the instrument; or (ii) the norm in question is part of customary international law and is binding on all nations.

Today, the most important international documents pertaining to migrants are:

- a. The 1951 Refugee Convention (and its amendment from 1967). This legally binding treaty gives refugees an important right - the right to not be sent back home into harm's way, except under extreme circumstances (Holly Yan)
- b. New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (New York Declaration) unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2016.

According to these documents, nations pledged to provide migrants the same standards of treatment enjoyed by other foreign nationals in a given country and, in many cases, the same treatment as nationals. The Refugee Convention is a legally binding documents and any breach of its provisions goes against the most fundamental principle of international law “Pacta sunt servanda.” (agreements must be kept)

As for the New York Declaration, we firmly believe that it represents a binding international custom under Article 39(1)(b) of the Statute of the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

## **2. Human life is sacred**

As the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says, “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” No matter what nationality you were born into every human has the right to life, liberty, and security (UDHR).

While we live in peace, immersed in our own bubbles of privilege, on the other side of the globe millions of people are forced to flee their homes because if they stay the prospect of them waking up the next day is never guaranteed. Their homes are ravaged by bloodshed, their families are torn apart, and the very idea of having food for their children is a fantasy. By the end of 2018, a record of 70.8 million people had been forcibly displaced by war, persecution and other violence worldwide (Global Trends Forced Displacement in 2018, p2).

We find it demeaning to think of nations turning away a person in need of help only because they were born on opposite sides of the border. Even in times where a nation’s self-interest’s outlook to develop their country contradicts its commitment to migrants a nation should value human life over monetary gain. After all, “All humans are alike and all humans are equal. It is just the perception of the eye that sees any different.” (Isabella Poretsis)

## **Argument II. Migration is conducive to economic growth**

There is a big misconception that migrants cause economic disasters in their host countries. In fact, migrants play a key role in improving the economy of their host countries. The immense economic benefits that follow immigration are threefold:

- 1.** The need of blue-collared workers will be filled by migrants - In the US, there is an undeniable need for labor workers. 7.4 million jobs are open and only 6 million people are looking for work (Alexia Campbell). In Germany, about 260,000 people would have to migrate to Germany and enter the labor market in order to meet the shortage of workers (Florence Schulz). Once settled in Germany, refugees actively take language courses and look for opportunities to enter the labor force. Almost 35 percent of refugees who had arrived in Germany in 2015 had a job by October 2018, compared with 20 percent the previous year (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees). This shows how even refugees work in the host country, not only economic migrants.
- 2.** Migrants bring new skills - More than half of US startups valued at \$1 billion and above were founded by at least one immigrant (National Foundation for American Policy in 2016). This example clearly illustrates that migrants have the full potential to carry innovations with them to their host country.
- 3.** Migrants help grow the GDP - Although the world's estimated 266 million migrants comprise only about 3.4% of the global population, they contribute more than 9% of GDP (World Economic Forum).
- 4.** Migrants solve aging societies - A world without immigration is a world where countries' population dissipates in the near future. The UK's median age is at 40.5, Sweden's average age is at 41.2. On the other hand, the median age in Iraq is 19 and 24 in Libya (Kenneth Rapoza). The labor force in Germany is estimated to shrink by a third, or around 16 million people, by 2060 without immigration. (Deutsche Welle) Japan's rural population is expected to plunge another 17% in by 2030. Further out, the decline will steepen, with the population falling by 2% per year in the 2030s. (Yuko Takeo) The lack of working-age citizens is a huge risk because

if it escalates these countries will be unable to even pay the retirement pensions for their aged society. Migrants will mitigate this issue by being an active member of the society. Immigrants paid, in 2014, an estimated \$223.6bln in federal taxes in the US (\$123.7bln for Social Security; \$32.9bln for Medicare). On the state and local level, immigrants paid \$104.6bln in taxes. A staggering total of \$328.2bln in taxes (National Immigration Forum)!

### **Argument III. International relations**

International relations are essential to a nation because without maintaining a healthy relationship with other countries, it would not be able to receive support from other countries and participate in international events at any time. Interstate relations are based on mutual expectation that each nation follows the rules. When breached, there are multiple ways in which international law is enforced, including: coercive methods such as public pressure for compliance, national courts and coercive methods from other states (Damrosch).

The recalcitrance of some Eastern European countries to the European Union's (EU) policy to welcome migrants led to a backlash from their EU partners. Emmanuel Macron, the president of France, supported financial sanctions against those refusing to accept migrants. (*France 24*) "We can't have countries that benefit hugely from EU solidarity and claim national self-interest when it comes to the issue of migrants," he said, adding "I am in favor of sanctions being imposed in the event of no cooperation." This clearly indicates that not accepting migrants divides countries into two opposites (pro-migration and anti-migration), thus putting the international relationships between countries at risk.

Another example can be seen from the bitter tension between other European countries. After the Italian government had decided to allow private charity ships to disembark migrants rescued at sea, Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto criticized it severely because he thought

that this move would be deplorable and dangerous (Jamie Dettmer). In response, Italian officials have called for sanctions for EU member states who refuse to take in migrants under any proposed redistribution scheme. Again, this shows how anti-migration countries risk good relations and even sanctions for their narrow focus on self-interest when it comes to migrants.

## **Rebuttals**

### **The Inability to Commit**

The affirmative team ran its argument on two levels: democratic and authoritarian states.

a. They stated that democratic nations have “constant changes in priority” and they are unable to commit to policies “over long periods of time.” They gave the example of the US pulling out of the Paris agreement. We disagree. For the affirmative’s argument and the example of the Paris agreement to stand in the context of this motion, it should have proven:

- That if not ALL, then a majority of the democratic nations - Canada, France, UK etc - pulled out of the climate change compact because its stipulations were too onerous on the developed nations and, therefore, went against their self-interest. A single example, even if it is about a nation as important as the US, is insufficient to prove a general pattern of behavior that characterizes democracies vis-a-vis their international obligations;
- The affirmative fails to mention that the decision of the Trump administration to pull out of the Paris Agreement was faced with heavy criticism straining the relations with the allies (Brendan Guy). In other words, the negative effects from point of view of diplomatic relations were massively negative as we explained earlier.

- Even if we follow the affirmative's narrative, though the governments change throughout the time, the people stay for as long as they live and their values remain on the ground forever. Therefore, we believe that the country's priority and values will stay the same making it possible for that country to commit to a law for a long time.
2. The affirmative has argued that international obligations pose immediate danger of "demolishing" the country's political stability. Their example to support the claim was the case of Belgium when the decision to sign the Global Compact on Migration was met with fierce domestic opposition leading to a resignation of a major political party from the governing coalition, and in turn, failure to sign the agreement (Georgi Gotev). We would like to remind the affirmative team that this motion is about international obligations that nations had agreed upon; the Belgian example, therefore, is irrelevant because as a result of the controversy the country decided not to sign up for the compact, and NOT to violate or scale back on its pre-existing international obligations toward migrants.
  3. They argue that authoritarian countries are unable to follow their commitments to migrants because they have domestic economic instability, hold a status of an international pariah, and have lower life expectancies and health outcomes than freer nations. Two points of response:
    - a. The affirmative team brings to the table an argument about the relative economic vulnerability of authoritarian regimes. They extensively explain the inner workings of the DPRK's political system, natural resource dependence of most authoritarian countries, and how even nations like Singapore, while not dependent on the commodities' price swings, are still vulnerable to economic cycles of democratic

nations. We don't argue with what we see as a rather vague and overgeneralized portrayal of the economies of so-called authoritarian regimes; however, we don't see how this argument is in anyway relevant in this motion, especially since the affirmative team never gave specific mechanism as to why an economic instability would always make "*the domestic economic instability that is inherent in an authoritarian regime prevents long-lasting and effective commitments.*" Even if it were true, our team posits that (i) taking the other team on its best case that economic considerations should always rule supreme, and (ii) given that our opponents agree that authoritarian regimes uniquely rely on trade and cooperation with democratic nations, a grave violation of international commitments toward migrants will result in disruption of trade ties, diplomatic isolation, and even sanctions, therefore such countries are far more likely to abide by their commitments.

- b. Even if the country is suffering from economic instability as the affirmative argues, we have to consider that the migrants are at a huge risk right now. We don't have the time to wait for all countries to become economically stable because the plight of the migrants is immediate and urgent.

### **Self-Interest and Economic Stability**

The affirmative's whole argumentation was hinged on an analogy of free trade and tariffs. However, there is no correlation between "theoretical economics" and commitments to migrants as they are inherently distinct concepts. Even so, if we use their analogy of "misguided tariffs and free trade," we believe that free trade is accepting migrants and "protectionist policies" are any actions against migration, NOT vice versa. If migrants were the products in a

market, supporting free trade and not putting any tariff and sanctions is like allowing migrants without much regulation and will ultimately benefit the country as it is a free market that the affirmative advocated for. It is proven that migrants contribute to the economy of the host country by paying taxes and providing workforce. On the other hand, following the affirmative's logic, not following the international agreements or treaties is similar to imposing tariffs and regulations on free trade, thus, holding back the development of the economy. For instance, a study found out that refugee women could generate as much as 1.4 trillion dollars for the annual Global GDP (Chantal Da Silva).

Even if free trade was the country's self-interest, theory of the invisible hand that the affirmative provided is not a guaranteed path to prosperity as the idea of invisible hand itself has never proven right (Jonathan Schleher). A nation must not lean on a non-practical theory to decide the future of millions of lives at the border.

### **Self-Interest and Political Process**

The affirmative side stated how citizens losing their "political relevance" and the chance to express their self-interest in Egypt. However, we do not see how this point is related to the motion as the affirmative did not point out the effect of migration on the political process of that country.

Lastly, the affirmative side constantly advocated for a global prosperity throughout the whole argument. However, the world that they are creating is not a progressive and developed world. We do not believe that leaving millions of lives on the edge between life and death is not a path to global prosperity.

### **V Conclusion**



In their conclusion, the affirmative wrote “No single nation has the “obligation” to solve world hunger and climate change at once, as no nation can do so.” We agree; this is exactly why our team believes that a world with international cooperation and empathy for others is a better world. Binding to international law that acts for global survival and prospering is the right path to the prosperity of the human race (Henkin). Only then would we be able to solve far-ranging issues as a global community.

The affirmative team claimed that international commitment was not feasible. However, we proved to you that nations can sustain both the migrants and the citizens, furthermore, the contributions of migrants can economically benefit the host nation, through taxes and labor. We told you how this benefit is even more important in aging societies.

They stated, “A nation focused on external commitment is unable to muster enough resources to reinforce the home front. This leads to domestic instability and chaos, which decreases security”. A gross mischaracterization indeed. Nation’s self-interest and international commitments to migrants is not a zero-sum game. The moment one is dropped is the moment where bridges burn and one country alienates itself from the others. We brought migration-related examples on how selfish acts may backfire on nations.

This debate is about the livelihoods of people. Principally, our team is the only team that acknowledges the fact that migrants are equal and deserve a place to live. The affirmative leaves these people in the dark to fend for themselves when they literally do not have food on their tables.

We oppose!

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# Team 33 – Affirmative Rebuttal

## Introduction

### Definitions

Although the negative provides what appears to be a definition of international commitment by including two pieces of international legislation, that definition is so constrictive that it excludes reasonable and significant authorities. A nation-state's international leanings and commitments are not expressed solely in treaty form. In fact, nations must frequently respond to rapidly unfolding world events. Excluding statements of international intent from accredited representatives of governments is restrictive. Furthermore, the negative does not provide any source for their definition; therefore, prefer the affirmative definition of international commitment. Aside from the aforementioned discrepancy, the negative neither attacks the affirmative definitions nor provides any alternatives. The affirmative interprets this as unequivocal agreement of the negation regarding the definitions used by the affirmative. Thus, this round should be evaluated under such definitions.

### Framework

The negative claims several times that the affirmative disregards the criterion of global welfare and discards the lives of millions of migrants. However, as proven in the affirmative constructive, societal development in every individual polity improves the human condition in aggregate, implying that actions in the self-interest of the state are beneficial to the nation itself, to migrants, and to the international community at large. This was **untouched** by the negative despite being a crucial affirmative impact. Furthermore, acting in the self-interest of the nation increases economic and political prosperity, eliminating key push factors of migration. This

reduces need-based migration, lessens global disruption, contributes to world stability, and ensures that fewer people must resort to an action as extreme as fleeing their homeland. The number of migrants that the negative claims are being harmed by the affirmative is therefore exaggerated. The affirmative world also upholds migration that acts in a nation's self-interest, but negative arguments only choose to consider an affirmative world in which migration does not exist. We do not support such a world.

## **Response to the Negative Constructive**

### **On “Primacy of International Law”:**

In the negative world, failure to enforce currently existing commitments will result in an inability to create future ones. Therefore, the international order of the negative relies on a complex system of promises and quid-pro-quos. Beyond the inherent instability in such a balance, the negative implies that dishonoring a commitment brings the whole “card-house” down. However, countries renege on international commitment frequently, but the world order still stands. In the affirmative constructive, both the US withdrawal from the Paris agreement and the Belgian withdrawal from the UN Compact on Migration are mentioned. In neither of these cases was the world order irrevocably shaken (Sengupta et al., Birnbaum). Therefore, the negative’s assertion that “only when nations adhere to their commitments can they expect others to do the same” is theoretically pleasing, but pragmatically flawed.

### **On “Human Life is Sacred”:**

The affirmative agrees with the negative that human life is sacred, and that millions of people are unable to live in peace. However, the negative implication that the affirmation does not “value human life over monetary gain” is a gross misrepresentation of the facts presented in

the affirmative constructive. The negative “prioritizes” migrants by destroying the nations which they hope to enter; thus, the negative values *neither* human life *nor* economic gain. The affirmative, however, upholds these concepts and values *both* life *and* prosperity.

### **On “Migration is Conducive to Economic Growth”:**

Though we agree with the negative’s claim that migration often allows for economic growth, this resolution refers to relative advantages of self-interest and international commitment within a tightly defined bound: the crucial qualifier “**when in conflict**” ensures that all arguments operate in a zero-sum game between the two options. Thus, all arguments must be framed while keeping the qualifier “when in conflict” in mind; doing otherwise would ignore this pivotal principle of the resolution. The negative’s second contention only describes examples in which international commitments to migrants are in the interest of both the migrants and the economy of the nation, so this argument is trivial to the debate at hand.

### **On “International Relations”:**

The negative refers to “public pressure” as a mechanism by which international commitment can be enforced. While it is politically troublesome to draw condemnation from allies over policy matters, public criticism is not a form of coercion. While the negative clearly demonstrates that France and Italy strongly criticized recalcitrant EU nations, they fail to demonstrate any meaningful change that took place as a result of that criticism. This is not accidental: *no change took place at all*. Though France and Italy wished other EU nations to change policy, they valued the continued existence of the EU as a political bloc more than international commitments to migrants. Therefore, any action against nations which did not uphold migration commitments did not extend beyond verbal condemnation (Dos Santos, et al.).



This demonstrates a crucial feature of international commitments: some commitments take precedence over others, which means that some compacts are almost unenforceable. In fact, the negative world's "card-house" system of commitment guarantees conflicting compacts and an inability to coerce member-states into enforcing those compacts, because of the successive layers of commitment upon which relationships are built. This only further upholds the affirmative argument that international commitment is not feasible for nation-states when in conflict with self-interest.

## **Defense of the Affirmative Constructive**

### **On the Inability to Commit: Democratic Nations**

The negation claims that the Paris agreement is inapplicable to this debate because only one democratic nation—the United States—pulled out. In response, the affirmation presents the withdrawal of Canada and New Zealand from the Kyoto Protocol. That protocol was signed by a Canadian Liberal government, and upon a switch of parliamentary majority from Liberal to Conservative, the agreement was abandoned ("Canada"). Meanwhile, New Zealand ratified the compact under a Labour government, and refused to comply with it upon a switch to a National party majority ("NZ"). Therefore, the United States is not an isolated case. Democratic nations abandon international commitments upon changes in governmental priorities, to align themselves with the voting public. This clearly shows international commitment to be unstable and undesirable when in conflict with national self-interest. The negative also claims that though governments change, people's values remain the same. If values remain static, then voters in democratic states would not elect different governments. If the negative maintains that "values

remain on the ground forever,” they ignore natural social progression and reduce a complex process to an unchanging impossibility.

Lastly, the negative derides the relevance of the experience of Belgium and the U.N. Compact on Migration, claiming that it is irrelevant because Belgium never “signed up for the compact.” **This is proven false by multiple reputable sources.** In reality, only after the Belgian prime minister Charles Michel signed the pact did the Belgian government collapse, and this collapse led to Belgium’s premature withdrawal (Atkinson; Paris; Strange; Crisp). This example therefore holds perfect relevance in the resolution’s context.

### **On the Inability to Commit: Authoritarian Nations**

The negative claims that the affirmative believes “economic considerations should always reign supreme.” The affirmative has never implied or stated anything of the kind, and does not recognize the negative’s logic in arriving at this conclusion. Even if the affirmative were to endorse such an extreme scenario (which it does not), the negative’s claim that there could be a “disruption of trade ties, diplomatic isolation, and even sanctions” is not supported by research or sourcing, signifying its irrelevance in this academic debate.

The negative further claims that “We don't have time to wait for countries to become economically stable because the plight of migrants is immediate.” As shown in our framework, only the affirmative world simultaneously upholds economic progress and the lives of citizens and migrants. Therefore, the negative is correct that the plight of migrants is immediate; only the affirmative world takes steps towards addressing this plight.

### **On Global Benefits of Prioritizing Self Interest**

The negation claims that our argument relies on the “analogy of free trade and tariffs.” No such analogy is made. Free trade and tariffs are real concepts that exist in the real world, and the affirmative utilizes them as such. Therefore, the affirmative does not believe that free trade equates to open borders, that protectionism refers to sovereignty, or that migrants can be the product in a market. The negative rebuttal of self-interest and economic stability, therefore, suffers from a baseline misunderstanding of the affirmative case. The negative also criticizes the invisible hand despite it being a universal economic truth.

The negation again questions the relevance of an affirmative argument instead of attacking its substance, claiming that the affirmative example of Egypt is irrelevant because the affirmative did not mention the effect of migration on Egypt. However, non-migratory issues are well within the bounds of this debate if they pertain to the solvency of nation-states and the impact of that solvency on the ability to commit. The affirmative constructive clearly demonstrates that Egypt’s political system leads to a decrease in prosperity, which impacts the ability of the Egyptian government to fulfill its commitments.

## **Conclusion**

This resolution frames the future of the nation-state as a contest between the prioritization of self-interest and the subjugation of the state for commitment. In the affirmative world, the former is chosen, and nations take the path to prosperity, reaping the benefits of an emboldened world market and an enhanced living standard. Without attention to self-interest, polities are unable to economically advance, leaving migrants “in the dark to fend for themselves when they literally do not have food on their tables”. It is therefore logical that the negative has **no defense**

for the clearest example of domestic hardship brought on by international largesse: **the affirmative examples of OPEC and the Yom Kippur War.**

When evaluating this round, the fundamental question is clear: which side helps the most people while expending the least amount of resources? The affirmative has proven throughout its constructive that international commitment is unfeasible, impractical, and chaos-sowing, wasting valuable resources on what amounts to a pipe-dream when in conflict with self-interest. The affirmative has also given irrefutable evidence that the extension of self-interest helps all, migrants and citizens. Meanwhile, the negative has offered flimsy international doctrine, moralistic and non-rigorous argumentation, and alarmist “even sanctions” rhetoric, with no evidence to back it up. Thus, vote for the continuing prosperity and flourishing of the nation-state.

For the previous reasoning,

Affirm.

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# Team 34 – Negative Rebuttal

## Introduction

The affirmative team pushed an unreasonable burden on the negation to “defend a world in which the nation-state is forced to overextend itself both at home and abroad, leading to global chaos,” where “all arguments operate in a zero-sum game.” We learned that migrants “destroy” nations, but never learned how.

The affirmative case suffered from multiple case tensions. They stated that “refugees flee from calamities, ranging from open war immigration in Syria to financial pressure in El Salvador...” only to say migrants move “**voluntarily** across the boundaries.” They claim that international commitments cannot be upheld, only to explain that the same nations prioritize other international obligations.

Of the myriad examples that the affirmative brought to the table, only one - the Belgian government coalition dissolution - related to migration. The rest: oil prices, climate change etc.

The affirmative refused to engage with our arguments only to cherry-pick phrases and turn them into strawmen.

In this essay, we will analyze this debate on the following:

1. Definitions
2. Principle
3. Practicality

## Definitions

According to the affirmative, conflict is “any time when a tradeoff is required between nation’s self-interest and international commitments to migrants.” They failed, when they couldn’t

provide any scenarios of a trade-off between international commitments and the country's self-interest. They crossed the bench when they said "The affirmative world also upholds migration that acts in a nation's self-interest," agreeing that neither migrants hold back the host country's development, nor do the migrants violate the rights of the citizens.

The affirmative definition of international commitment was "**any formal declaration** of intent from a head of state or plenipotentiary thereof." In the absence of any examples we proffered the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants ("NYD") and the Refugee Convention - a global treaty and a declaration unanimously adopted by the United Nations ("UN") member states.

Their response was "A nation-state's international commitments are not expressed solely in treaty form." The NYD is "a statement of international intent" adopted unanimously by all UN members. The International Court of Justice in its Advisory Opinion on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons opined "that General Assembly resolutions, even if they're not binding, may sometimes have normative value. They can, in certain circumstances provide evidence important for establishing the existence of a rule or the emergence of an *opinio juris*." (ICJ) **No response** from the affirmative.

## **Principle**

We argued that when countries agree to international documents regarding migrants in exercise of sovereignty, they must abide by their commitments. The affirmative say that "nations must frequently respond to rapidly unfolding world events" and, therefore, are unable to uphold their international commitments. We ask, why can't nations respond while still staying true to their commitments to migrants, particularly since failure to do so would backfire on their self-interest because they will no longer be able to rely on the promises made to them by other nations. The US alone has hundreds of treaties with different countries coalitions. (US State Dept.)



Affirmative admitted that refugees and asylum seekers “come from open war immigration in Syria to financial pressure in Latin America.” Yet, never did they discuss what they propose to do with the refugees and the threats they face. Even if the affirmative had successfully proven that “societal development in every individual polity improves the human condition” we cannot see how 70.8 million (UNHCR) displaced people are protected. Even with the proposition fiat, one cannot assume that these people’s problems would disappear. When in conflict, the lives of millions of people must trump all self-interest!

## **Practicality**

### *(i) Commitment*

The affirmative failed to prove how nations would be unable to commit. When questioned why “the inherent domestic economic instability would cause an authoritarian regime to prevent long-lasting and effective commitments” in our constructive paper, they had **no response**. For democratic nations, they gave the example of the Yom Kippur War and how the US support for Israel caused **a spike in gas prices!** They gave the example of the US withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, to which we responded that it was an isolated and highly criticized move. They responded with the example of the **Kyoto Protocol** - again, unrelated to migration, insufficient to establish how “countries renege on international commitment frequently.” We remind the affirmative that one-third of refugees are hosted by the world’s poorest countries (Charlotte Edmond), in other words, all nations do their own part.

“The resistance of a nation to a law to which it has agreed does not derogate from the authority of the law because that resistance cannot, perhaps, be overcome. Such resistance merely makes the resisting nation a breaker of the law to which it has given its adherence, but it leaves the

law, to the establishment of which the resisting nation was a party, still subsisting” (S.S.Prometheus). Just because we have thieves, it doesn’t normalize stealing, similarly, having one or two countries break their international commitments doesn’t mean that all nations ought to. This rings particularly true for democratic nations where governments must uphold their promises, including international, in order to maintain the trust of their voters.

The affirmative response to our point about the consequences of breaking commitments was that “disruption of trade ties, diplomatic isolation, and even sanctions” was “not supported by research or sourcing.” We gave a full argument with the example of Hungary and EU. We explained that countries that violate international law face backlash. When talked about France calling for sanctions on Hungary over migration issues, team affirmative responded, “no change took place at all.” On the contrary, just recently fourteen-member countries of the EU agreed to a new solidarity mechanism proposed to allocate migrants and refugees. (Aljazeera).

### ***Migration and Economic Growth***

The affirmative’s response to our argument about migrants contributing to the economy was that “this argument is trivial.” They pushed us to defend a world where migrants destroy nations, which is not the case in the real world. We showed the long-term economic benefits of migration to which the affirmative responded that it “agrees with the negative’s claim that migration often allows for economic growth.”

## *Global Benefits of Prioritizing Self-Interest*

The affirmative states that “acting in the self-interest of the nation increases economic and political prosperity, eliminating key push factors of migration.” We are puzzled as to the exact mechanism how countries ravaged by civil war would suddenly solve all their problems, at least the affirmative never tells us how.

“Improvement of societal development in every individual polity improves the human condition in aggregate.” We agree, unfortunately, we must say that (a) it is unlikely to ever happen; and (b) even if it happens, that would take too long. The migration and refugee crisis is an urgent matter: every second could be crucial to saving a person from a life and death situation. The affirmative, unfortunately failed to deal with the real world.

Finally, Egypt’s example on how authoritarian regime’s policies harm the national prosperity. Having rebuked its relevance to the motion in our negative constructive we believe that there is **no need** for us to repeat ourselves.

## **Conclusion**

The affirmative defined conflict under this motion “as any time when a tradeoff is required between a nation’s self-interest and its international commitments to migrants.” Our team provided three main reasons as to why international commitments to migrants must always trump a nation’s self interest.

1. It is principally justified due to the sanctity of human life and the primacy of international law.
2. On the practical level: the economic and social benefits of migration are undeniable and prevalent even in a situation of conflict.

3. Furthermore, the international commitments to migrants is one of the things that ensure the countries international relations and it is enforceable and feasible.

The affirmative lost this debate when they:

1. Strayed from the motion and talked about anything **but migrants**;
2. Failed to engage with our principal arguments or agreed with us on the economic benefits of migration;
3. Ignored the plight of the refugees;
4. Attempted to change their definitions in the rebuttal paper by removing treaties from the international commitments;
5. Failed to prove why nations couldn't serve their self-interest while not breaking their commitments to the migrants.

The negative case directly benefits all stake-holders while the affirmative presents an ambiguous utopia where nothing happens. We take all clashes - on the principle and practical implications.

Proud to take this round, proud to oppose!

## Works cited

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