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Human Rights Council

Topic A: "Skepticism on the COVID-19 Vaccine"

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I. COMMITTEE BACKGROUND

The Human Rights Council, also known as HRC, is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations conformed of 47 states, that prioritizes the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide. It discusses all human rights that are relevant throughout the year and aims to meet international goals regarding rights injustice in particular areas around the globe. It was founded in 2006 and its base currently stands in the city of Geneva, Switzerland, where all human rights debates are hosted.

I. HISTORY OF THE TOPIC

A. Introduction to the topic

As a new decade was approaching, a virus unexpectedly struck the world by surprise. In January 2020, the WHO officially declared the outbreak a "Public Health Emergency of International Concern". Two months later, it was declared a pandemic. Panic arose as soon as various cases were rapidly

reported, marking the beginning of a global emergency. Then came a time of isolation and abandonment of the outside world, a stage we know today as quarantine. Months after months went by, and the coronavirus was still scattered around the world, but people were slowly getting accustomed to living alongside this recently discovered virus. Even though that was the case, people were still preoccupied with the well-being of others, especially those who were delicate and highly vulnerable. Society was in need of a solution after patiently waiting for a long time. Despite the fact that the WHO imposed mask mandates and increased health regulations everywhere, people weren't completely satisfied.

The COVID-19 epidemic is recognized as the fifth documented pandemic since the Spanish flu in 1918. Around September 2021, more than a year later, approximately 200 million cases of the virus were reported, as well as 4.6 million deaths. As the quantity of cases and concerns enlarged, scientists were rummaging through their ideas in order to create the most effective medical and trustworthy solution: a vaccine.

In the United States of America, before the 2020 elections, President Donald Trump established a goal before the end of the year; he assured his citizens the release of a COVID-19 vaccine that same year was possible and encouraged everyone to initiate a remedy for this catastrophe. As soon as he announced those promises, scientists and doctors did everything to stop the spread of the virus, and consequently, results started to take place.

The first trials that commenced the construction of the vaccine took place in March 2020, using special and decades-old technology called mRNA. However, the official release of the vaccine was announced in August 2020, Russia

being the first country to announce their vaccine, Sputnik V. It didn't take long for the United States of America to successively release their first vaccines, established by Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech, two well known pharmaceutical companies. During the last few months of the year 2020, companies worldwide were in the process of developing more and more vaccines. In no time, those pharmaceutical companies became billionaires.

B. Evolution of the topic

By December 2020, the Federal and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized two doses of mRNA vaccines for emergency use, considering the chaotic state of the pandemic and how millions of innocent lives were put in jeopardy.

Although the solution was already offered, many were reluctant about it, just by noticing the rapidness of its release and the scarcity of tests it required. A vaccine usually takes approximately two full years to be fully developed and sufficiently tested, and this particular vaccine took only months to be launched. Hence, to assure its effectiveness and safety, doctors and scientists made sure to liberate any information that carried complete evidence as to why everyone should have unthinkable reliance on vaccines. Additionally, many emphasized the point of protecting those around us, considering the exposure of those who are vulnerable to the virus.

As time passed by and many were taking the shot, vaccine mandates began to make an appearance. A vaccine mandate is a legal public health requirement that authorizes one to be vaccinated against a particular disease. With this, institutions have the right to restrict access to those that don't comply to the mandate. The goal they aimed to achieve with

this was to protect the health of others and accelerate the end of this global catastrophe. However, many didn't find the idea pleasing.

Since many businesses imposed vaccine mandates on their employees, lots of people lost their jobs for not complying. The majority of those who were left without a job claimed they were having their medical freedom taken away from them, stating it has been a custom in history for everyone to own the right to make these kinds of medical decisions, making the coronavirus vaccine mandates highly unjust. Those in office that were already vaccinated view the unvaccinated as a threat to those who are delicate, sparking tension between both sides.

Thereafter, children and students were being pushed to be vaccinated, and some countries began to impose vaccination requirements to pass their borders. Sooner or later, a third dose of the vaccine started to be authorized for emergency use as well. As to this, one side was optimistic about this idea, considering how it will benefit and protect the health of everyone and increase the management of the uncontrollable spread of the virus. However, the opposite side was alarmed by the fact that many were obligated to be vaccinated even if they showed a remote risk to their health and consequently lost their jobs. Additionally, some even thought the vaccine did more damage to one's body than the virus itself. Many voices were being immediately silenced for speaking out against the peculiarity of forcing and threatening people to get vaccinated. They thought there was no reason to get the shot because the probability of getting the virus was still present, and a vaccine should supposedly make the possibility disappear. A great handful of people today think the idea of getting the majority vaccinated goes beyond the

protection of others, reaching an abyss of pure doubt and suspicion regarding the government's intentions. Moreover, both leagues blame each other for using untrustworthy sources in the media and therefore are utterly misinformed. This idea has consequently created tension between the league that has done everything to save lives and has outdone itself for the outstanding technology the vaccine possesses, and between the league that also is fighting to save lives and is incredibly skeptical about this situation, considering the way the government pushes everyone to get the shot and the elevation of heart issues worldwide. So, the real question here is, which side saves more lives?

C. Relevant events so far

Jennifer Bridges gets fired and sues the Methodist Hospital

In June 2021, around 150 employees in the Methodist Hospital quit or got fired because of the vaccine mandates. Among those who were terminated was registered nurse Jennifer Bridges, who later sued the hospital with the help of other employees who lost their job. The hospital defended its policy, stating the vaccines have gone through various tests to prove its efficacy. As an additional note, those who were unvaccinated were outnumbered by those that did vaccinate, providing extra leverage to the hospital. However, Bridges argued against that point, saying if the vaccine was really the greatest solution, everyone, even families, would be rushing towards it, without the urgent need to threaten and bribe them. With this statement, Bridges and her fired coworkers lost the appeal in court.

In the course of these last few months, Bridges was offered many job offers in hospitals that didn't reinforce vaccine mandates. She also keeps fighting for the freedom of those who do not wish to receive the vaccine. Other than Jennifer Bridges, many hospital employees who don't see the need to get vaccinated are under a lot

of pressure nowadays. Many are convinced the hospital's patients will be safer if every doctor or nurse that surrounds them is fully vaccinated, making them a threat on the hospital's floors.

Experts against the vaccine get censored

Many scientists and doctors worldwide have conducted various experiments and investigations regarding the vaccine. The majority encourage society to get vaccinated after confirming its efficacy and safety. However, there is a handful who has discovered suspicious and severe effects the vaccine could have on everyone long-term.

Ever since the first release of the vaccine, doctors and scientists have been uploading information to the media about the vaccine, with the objective of aiding those who are still considering getting the shot, and warning society in general about the true, evil intentions of the government possesses. They claim the COVID-19 vaccine was not sufficiently tested and carries technology (mRNA) that goes completely against the efficiency of our natural immune system, and therefore explains why we should be skeptical about the situation. To expand their perspective, they rely on evidence that is also censored frequently in the media, which, according to them, obviously should ring an alarm. Such evidence includes the drastic amount of death rates reported by this sole vaccine, the increase of heart failure among young adults, malfunctions in the reproductive system, the number of threats and job losses, the censorship of other alternatives rather than the vaccine itself, etc.

Despite their knowledge and well-conducted studies, the government still silences these doctors and scientists speaking out against the vaccine, stating falsification and unreliability of the information they release to the world. Experts for the vaccine argue that the majority of vaccine investigations have been reported and

confirmed to be trustworthy several times and have been controlling the spread of the virus progressively.

Even though the majority of this information is silenced, there are many who are still avoiding being ignored. Among them include Dr. Robert Malone, the official inventor of the mRNA vaccine technology. He was the one who brought to life this amazing technology and is currently speaking out against it, stating that “the benefits (of the vaccine) probably don’t outweigh the risk” (2021). Doctors who are for the COVID-19 vaccine claim everything that comes out of his mouth is misinformation and is only stated in the conservative media. On the other hand, others argue that his information is the most relevant, considering how he was behind the manufacture of the vaccine technology.

In brief, considering how much money these pharmaceutical companies have been generating, this league against the vaccine state these products are a fraud and a way to maliciously control society. They don’t care if their vaccines provoke malfunctions in people’s hearts as long as they get cash.

Moderna and Pfizer vaccination for kids 5 years and under

Ever since the authorization by the pharmaceutical companies, Moderna and Pfizer, for the vaccination of children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years, hospitals worldwide have been suggesting parents get their children vaccinated, despite the fact that they are not affected severely by the virus. Doctors claim it will precipitate the ending of this pandemic, and it will especially protect everyone that surrounds them. Children do in fact get the virus and can therefore spread it. There have been cases in which children have been hospitalized, and it’s a situation that doctors emphasize should be prevented at all costs, even if it’s a minimum percentage of the world’s population. For that matter, doctors encourage families to get every member vaccinated, for the

protection of others and the family itself. The other league thinks it's unnecessary, taking into consideration the yet, present probability of being infected again, even if they have the injection. In addition, there have also been several reports of children having major, long-term heart issues, arising further doubts and resentment.

Mandatory COVID vaccination in Paris, France

In 2021, Paris issued extreme vaccination mandates in indoor public locations, such as restaurants and cinemas. This caused major controversy worldwide, having both encouraging comments and attacks on the French government. The main reason such an obligation was imposed was to push those who have not yet received the vaccine. A surprising 55% of adults were still reluctant on taking the vaccine due to the various alarms they have been receiving and the feeling of not having to take the vaccine because of perfect health conditions. As an effect, citizens felt controlled by the government, considering they had limited access to many locations. However, this was partially seen as a positive matter, noticing the progress the world could make if everyone received the injection, though eventually the pressure reached its limit and President Emmanuel Macron reversed this law.

Frequent heart attacks among athletes

As many athletes required the vaccine to continue competing and practicing their sport, several cases of heart failure were reported. Scientists against the vaccine stated those who got the shot were at higher risk of heart malfunction, especially athletes, for they push their heart more than others. On the other hand, doctors argue that the vaccines have nothing to do with these severe heart attack cases among sport players. They claim their heart has been delicate and these cases are more rare than scientists claim them to be.

II. CURRENT ISSUES

A. Panorama

The pandemic has brought unprecedented health and economic consequences worldwide. Ever since its rise in the year 2020, society has been learning to react and adapt to this new and abrupt manner of living. Every delegation was opting for the safety of their citizens and consequently embarked on a mission to create the best recipe for a remedy. When the WHO officially declared the circumstance a “pandemic”, every delegation’s first reaction was to isolate each of their citizens. Then, they went on and isolated only those found during an incubation period and those that were already affirmed to be infected. Despite every effort, millions of lives were at stake, and delegations frantically worked on the solution. As soon as the first vaccine was launched, the whole world’s purpose was to get their citizens vaccinated to disintegrate this virus for good.

B. Points of view

United States of America

On July 15, 2022, 79.3% of Americans had at least one dose of the vaccine and 67.8% have been fully vaccinated. Ever since Pfizer and Moderna began working on the development of the vaccine, the United States of America has been fully determined to move forward regardless of the dangers the virus brought forward to this world. In no time, the USA became the largest free vaccination program in history, administering more than 125,000 daily shots and mobilizing 90,000 vaccination locations nationwide.

Based on researched data, it was estimated that the vaccine in December 2021 saved 1 million lives and prevented 10 million hospitalizations. Pharmaceutical companies in the delegation have also been working on developing more advanced vaccination

treatments. With this, citizens will be able to fight any pandemic or unexpected wave coming in the future.

To battle the spread of misinformation against their actions, the USA is known to be the delegation that silences the most voices, despite the fact they value the will of free speech in their constitution above anything. This has caused lots of controversy between the right and the left, elevating the tension and polarization there already is between the two.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom evidently owns one of the highest percentages of reliance on the vaccine, taking into account the number of citizens that have taken the injection. In total, 80.3% of the UK's citizens have taken at least one dose of the vaccine, and 75.2% are fully vaccinated. They firmly believe the vaccine is the gateway to the ending of this pandemic. To aid other delegations in the world who are making slow progress, the UK sent 9 million doses of the vaccine overseas to delegations like Jamaica and Kenya to tackle the pandemic. They fight for the well-being of their people and other delegation's people. They fight for their world.

Spain

Spain is also known to be one of the largest leaders driving the vaccination program in the European Union. There are outstandingly only a few citizens that have not yet been fully vaccinated in the entire country, specifically 14.8% in total. Thanks to the trust Spanish citizens own in their health system, there is remote hesitancy in the citizens' decision to take the vaccine. In comparison to other nations, Spain is the sole country that has the majority of children vaccinated.

Japan

A study conducted in June by the Imperial College in London discovered that only 47% of people in Japan trust the COVID-19 vaccine. Although the majority of the population in Japan is already fully vaccinated, the study estimates that 43.9% of them were reluctant to take the doses. Investigators inferred the origin of their hesitancy on the vaccine is due to misinformation in the media, claiming their sources are unreliable and misleading. According to them, vaccination is undoubtedly the key to controlling the spread of the virus. If many citizens of Japan are reluctant to take the vaccine, an adjustment in the type of media they receive must take place.

Mexico

Mexico has been contributing immensely to the spread of the COVID-19 vaccine throughout the country, working hard to stop this pandemic. They have made exceptional progress, reaching 100 million reports of vaccination reception by August 2021. However, Mexico confronted a serious issue in the transportation of the vaccines. In April 2021, the United Nations warned Mexico about the discovery of fake vaccines in Veracruz. The situation originates from the black market, which robs several bundles of the substance and replaces them with water. With the news being released, some claim the fake vaccines are a trick conducted by the government. With all the issues the vaccine already has, these people state this is yet another reason as to why we should be alarmed by the vaccines.

III. UN & EXTERNAL ACTIONS

A. UN

The World Health Organization (WHO) has become a leader in these desperate times. As soon as vaccines with incredible technology came to life, the WHO has been working hard to assure everyone has access to it. After months and months of managing vaccination transportation and encouraging institutions to impose

vaccine mandates all around the world, the WHO has received its 4.5 billion mark of vaccination reception globally. Now that the majority of civilization is fully vaccinated, the WHO's main priority in 2022 was to make sure delegations with economic unbalance and insufficient political commitment can also receive the vaccine. With this, the WHO launched COVAX, which aims to provide vaccination resources worldwide. Having this in mind, the WHO will soon reach its main goal to stop controlling this pandemic and future outbreaks entirely: having the whole mass population vaccinated.

Of course, they're aware of those that will by all means never get the shot. They don't talk about the deaths, unemployment cases, heart malfunction reports, or major threats to getting the vaccine. Many voices state the opposite of what the WHO is exposing to the public, stating this is a serious situation leading us nowhere. Because of this, there are still several matters that are yet to be solved.

B. External Actions

The US Supreme Court blocks Joe Biden's vaccine mandate

In January 2022, the US Supreme Court blocked Joe Biden's vaccine mandate, which required all large businesses with more than 100 employees to get everyone vaccinated and obligated unvaccinated employees to get weekly negative COVID-19 tests and wear a mask at all cost. This decision was made because the Supreme Court claimed the mandate exceeded Biden's administration.

With his horrific and disappointing public reputation, Biden expressed an unsupportive opinion regarding the Court's decision, saying how mandates save many lives.

On the other hand, former US President Donald Trump cheered on this decision, and stated vaccine mandates will further destroy the country's economy.

The European Union launches “Team Europe”

In December 2020, in order to help expand the COVID-19 vaccine around the world, the European Union created Team Europe. Their priority is to provide the resources to other countries and fight against the dangers of the virus. Team Europe nowadays is a main contributor to COVAX.

IV. CONCLUSION

The WHO should seek fair and transparent ways to provide the vaccine. Despite all the controversy being at its highest peak, many people are still dying, both vaccinated and unvaccinated. Efforts to give access to medical aid have been evident throughout the drastic years of the pandemic and various outstanding technological advances have been shown. However, many are still unsatisfied with this and are being silenced because of it. Furthermore, medical freedom is currently in jeopardy and heart failure is having a greater appearance among many ages. The search for safety is in our nature, and research has been our most effective tool nowadays to receive assurance. Although both leagues are incredibly polarized, both aim to save lives. What really distinguishes each side is the manner in which they seek this objective; to ensure everyone is safe, should freedom to decide be completely removed and have limited access to various opportunities to those that don't comply? Or should this be considered a medical emergency and therefore an act of protection? What does the government aim here? Safety or manipulation? Who is right?

V. IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

- Is the implantation of vaccine mandates the best solution to prevent the uncontrollable spread of the virus?
- Does your delegation impose vaccine requirements on those that arrive internationally?

- Is your delegation for or against firing employees that don't comply with vaccine mandates?
- What is the main reason hospitals push vaccination for minors?
- Is there a way to reinforce the reception of the vaccine without removing anyone's medical will?
- How much was the vaccine tested? Should the rapidness of its release be considered suspicious? Or a next step in the development of effective problem-solving?
- Did your delegation take part in the construction of the vaccine? In what ways did it incorporate?
- Is media censorship ok when it comes to misinformation? Or is it a violation of freedom of speech?
- Why are people dying of heart failure as soon as they receive the vaccine? Did they already have a heart malfunction before taking the dose?
- In what ways has the vaccine benefited society and the well-being of others? What kind of progress has been made?
- Does your delegation value freedom of speech? Are citizens being censored for speaking out against your health system?
- How can you know if your news source is reliable?

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