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Essay Mock

Topic Chosen = The Crisis of Ethics & Morality in International Politics

Essay Outline

Title = Moral Meltdown: The Ethical Crisis Unraveling Global Politics

A. Introduction

1. Defining Crisis of Ethics and Morality

1.1 Widespread disregard for ethical and moral frameworks

2. Importance of the Topic

3. Thesis Statement

B. Salient Examples of the Crisis

1. Iraq War and Fabricated Intelligence

2. Rohingya Genocide and Global Apathy

2.1 Over 700,000 Rohingya displaced (UNCHR)

3. Climate Agreements and Broken Promises

C. Causes of the Ethics & Morality Crisis

1. Realpolitik and Power Dynamics

1.1 Cold War Proxy Wars driven by ideological dominance

2. Economic Interests Over Human Rights

2.1 Arms Trade worth \$100 billion annually (SIPRI)

3. Weak Global Governance Mechanisms

3.1 Limited enforcement of UN Mandates

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D. Impacts of the Crisis of Ethics & Morality in International Politics

1. Prolonged Conflicts and Human Suffering

1.1 350,000 civilians dead in Syria (UNHCR)

2. Global Inequalities Widen

2.1 Africa bears 80% of global emissions impact (UNEP)

3. Erosion of Trust in International Institutions

3.1 Global Public trust in UN at 50% (Gallup)

E. Solutions To The Crisis

1. Strengthening Global Governance

1.1 Reforming UNSC to limit veto power

2. Enforcing Accountability Mechanisms

2.1 Strengthening the ICC

3. Fostering Global Ethical Standards

3.1 Promoting education on ethics and human rights through UNESCO

F. Conclusion

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Of the many contemporary issues plaguing international politics, one significant one is that of the crisis of ethics and morality. While society once turned to leaders and governments as safe havens and beacons of peace and prosperity, several key events within past decades have dispelled that narrative almost completely. Ethics refers to the principles guiding right and wrong in conduct, while morality is defined as a system of values shaping collective behaviour. This crisis on our hands is driven by the widespread disregard for ethical and moral frameworks in international relations. Values such as patience, integrity, accountability etc. are often non-existent within the contemporary political sphere, with both individuals and institutions failing to exercise such concepts. This topic is of utmost importance as ethical governance impacts peace, justice, and global cooperation. Failure to practice ethical and moral frameworks leads to human rights violations, power struggles, and inequities. The crisis of ethics and morality in international politics has several distinct causes, undermines global stability and deepens inequalities, and

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necessitates urgent reform for a more just international order.

One of the most striking examples of this crisis is the 2003 Iraq war and the eventual fabricated intelligence it involved. The conflict involved manipulated data on weapons of mass destruction, used by the US to justify intervention in Iraq. By the time the conflict ended, over 200,000 Iraqi civilian deaths occurred, according to the Iraq Body Count. Another more contemporary example of this crisis is the ongoing Rohingya Genocide that began in 2017. The crisis highlighted the global apathy of the world, as the international community failed to prevent ethnic cleansing in Myanmar. Through the course of the conflict, over 700,000 individuals have been displaced, while political leaders and institutions stood by and watched in silence. A third example highlighting the absence of ethics and morality in international politics is the broken promises associated with climate agreements.

Developed nations failing to meet pledged funding of \$100 billion annually for climate adaptation, according to the UN.

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Climate Change Report of 2023. This failure highlights how little importance is afforded to practicing morals and ethics when it comes to fulfilling political promises.

This crisis of ethics and morality has several distinct causes, the first one being realpolitik and power dynamics. The current political arena has become overwhelmingly dominated by approaching situations/incidents and tailoring reactions accordingly, as opposed to adopting a uniform approach towards international politics. As opposed to collective morality and ethics, nations and individuals have become preoccupied with national interests. A key example of this are the several Cold War proxy wars, driven by ideological dominance. Such wars, including the Vietnam and Korean War, had high rates of casualties and destruction. Leaders dismissed such impacts and concerns, and instead were driven by the pursuit of expanding regional influence and propagating national values.

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A second main cause of this crisis is the prioritization of economic interests over human rights. Politics today is closely associated with the pursuit of financial security and profits. According to SIPRI in 2023, the arms trade was worth \$100 billion annually. Such profits are routinely prioritized over peace initiatives, as conflicts are seen to bring large profits to certain countries. As a result, leaders and institutions abandon attempts to champion morals, and instead pursue attempts to champion profit.

A final main cause of this crisis is weak global governance mechanisms. When organization such as the UN and ICC first came into existence, they were regarded as the guardians of human rights, justice, political ethics, and morality. However, while these institutions are adept at articulating moral and ethical frameworks, the actual enforcement of such principles remains weak. A key example of this is the veto power of the P5 nations, which historically has been used to undermine global

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justice.

Investigating this crisis of ethics and morality further requires a closer look at its impacts. A first main impact is prolonged conflicts and human suffering. When leaders and institutions capable of enforcing ethics and morality neglect this responsibility, the reality is that certain groups will suffer. There are several prolonged conflicts in the world driven by the neglect of ethics and morals, such as the Syrian Civil War. The UNHCR reported in 2023 that civilian casualties in conflicts such as Syria exceed 350,000. This figure is staggering, yet such numbers have become commonplace within several conflicts across the world, conflicts that show no sign of being eradicated any time soon.

A second critical impact of this crisis is the widening of global inequities within the world. The multipolar world of today is characterized by nations occupying a wide variety of affluence, resources, and political clout. The

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balance of power has shifted towards richer nations. As such, these nations often hold the greatest amount of political influence in civil rights, human rights, and justice institutions. When such nations abandon a commitment to morality and ethics, the reality is that poorer nations will suffer a disproportionate impact of this abandonment. A key example of this is the ongoing crisis of climate change - poorer nations suffer disproportionate impacts. UNEP reported that Africa contributes 3% to global emissions but bears 80% of the global impact of these emissions. The result is widening global inequalities between nations and certain races, as these nations are poorly equipped to deal with far-reaching crises that have unprecedented impacts on their land and people. The failure of affluent nations to safeguard moral and ethics leads to prolonged conflicts as well as the introduction of new conflicts, with poorer nations bearing the brunt of this impact.

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A third significant impact this Crisis inflicts is the erosion of trust in international institutions. As mentioned previously, when institutions such as the UN and ICC were introduced, the intent was to preserve basic human rights, mediate bids-free within conflicts, and work to protect the rights of minorities and those less fortunate. When such goals go unchecked, the result is an ensuing chaos within the political arena of corrupt leaders, inept governments, prolonged conflicts, and endless war crimes. A Gallup World Poll conducted in 2024 revealed that global public trust in the UN at 50%. This figure is staggering, considering that the UN is intended to be global leader in safeguarding ethics. The impact of this erosion of trust is twofold → not only does it weaken the faith individuals have but it weakens the motivation individuals and organization have to uphold the written frameworks propagated by the international institutions. This lack of motivation can become a slippery slope, leading to a complete apathy towards morality and ethics in all spheres of life.

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To fully navigate this crisis permeating international politics, it is necessary to formulate solutions. One such solution is strengthening global governance. The root of this crisis is the inability of global institutions/frameworks and mandates to be fully enforced. Until these enforcement mechanisms are strengthened, it is futile to introduce new pieces of writing aimed at eradicating immorality. One key method to achieve this is to reform the UN Security Council, to limit veto power and ensure equitable representation. Limiting veto power of the five permanent members of UNSC works to ensure that nations cannot pick and choose which crises they wish to care about. Rather, they would be forced to focus on a wider range of issues applicable to several different ethnicities. Ensuring equitable representation ensures that minority nations bearing the disproportionate impact of global crises have an opportunity to voice their concerns, advocate for change, and directly engage with affluent nations capable of directing and impacting the discussion of moral and

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Ethical frameworks in the political arena.

A second solution to this crisis is enforcing accountability mechanisms. To ensure that nations and leaders take frameworks seriously, it is important to set a precedent of what will occur if they do not. A main root cause of why morality and ethics have been abandoned in today's politics, is because nations have realized there are no repercussions for doing so. There is a stark need to strengthen the ICC and sanction nations that violate human rights agreements. Only through such actions, are nations cognisant of the need to adhere to guidelines. This has seen to be successful in several scenarios - a key example is South Africa, where economic sanctions were seen to contribute towards ending apartheid. When nations become aware of the impact non-compliance will have, they are deterred from violating frameworks, and become motivated to pursue the path towards compliance.

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A final solution to ending this crisis is the promotion and fostering of global ethical standards. Promoting education on ethics and human rights is a cornerstone for addressing this crisis. Organizations like UNESCO play a vital role in cultivating a global culture of ethical awareness and principled decision-making. By integrating human rights and ethics into a formal education systems, diplomatic training, and public awareness campaigns, societies can create a foundation for moral accountability at every level of governance. For example, UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education framework encourages individuals to think beyond national interests, fostering a mindset centred on shared global challenges. Policymakers, diplomats, and leaders need to be trained in frameworks that prioritize long-term ethical considerations over short-term national or economic gains. Collaboration across sectors is essential to make this vision a reality. Over time, fostering a generation of leaders and informed citizens who value justice and equality can reshape the trajectory of

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international politics.

The crisis of ethics and morality in international politics represents one of the most pressing challenges of our time, threatening global stability, justice, and trust in international institutions. Key examples of ethical failures, such as the Iraq War and Rohingya genocide highlight the root causes of this crisis. These are realpolitik, economic self-interest, and weak global governance mechanisms. The impacts of this crisis are profound, from prolonged human suffering to widening global inequalities. However, solutions exist, such as strengthening global governance and fostering global ethical standards through education. Restoring morality in international politics is not an impossible task, but it requires concerted efforts from world leaders, institutions, and citizens. As individuals, we must demand transparency and fairness in global politics and support ethical initiatives. The time to act is now - our collective future depends on our ability to place morality at the center of global decision-making.