

# INTERNATIONAL MOOT COURT COMPETITION - 2025

## MOOT PROPOSITION

**THEME - INTERNATIONAL LAW**

*(Valmosa v Eritrea)*



1.The country of Eritrea is an island nation situated in the Caspian Sea neighboring the country of Valmosa. Eritrea was occupied by the Valmosan regime as a vassal state for thirty years until an internal revolution ensured that they gained independence in March, 2020. The population residing in Eritrea has a unique demographic structure. While thirty percent of the population comprises of the Valam community, the indigenous Eritarean people account for the remaining majority population. The Valam community was once considered the ruling elite when Eritrea was under colonial rule and has deep ties to the country of Valmosa. After gaining independence, the Democratic Government of Eritrea implemented certain measures due to which the Valam community was entirely confined to the city of Donghzuk situated in the northern part of the state.

2.The city of Donghzuk was neglected by the Eritrean government and suffered from lack of development. The city did not have basic amenities as compared to the other regions in the country. In 2021, there was a situation in which fresh water supply was not available in Donghzuk for one month leading to the death of many human beings. The Valams blamed the government majorly comprising of the majority community for their plight. On being questioned the President of Eritrea publicly stated that the Valams had played the role of traitors during the Eritrean freedom struggle, hence their current fate was justified. The President even mentioned that this was a form of collective punishment being inflicted upon the Valams for their earlier betrayal.

3.Valmosa was extremely concerned about the constant mistreatment being suffered by the Valams in Donghzuk. It claimed that the minority community has the legal right of self-determination to ensure that their interests are not overlooked. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of Valmosa, the constant violation of the right to human dignity without any recourse for the Valam community was an issue of serious international concern. The same was raised at the United Nations Security Council but any decisive action was thwarted by the use of the veto power. The situation in Donghzuk began to become worse by each passing day as regular food and water shortages were becoming the norm. The Valams were not even permitted to join the public services or acquire higher education due to absence of such institutions in their city.

4.The civilians in Donghzuk were reeling under the impact of severe neglect and systematic disenfranchisement. The only route available to them seemed collective retaliation in whatever manner possible. A protesters group was formed by the Valams known as Donghzukan Liberation Army (DLA). Initially the DLA only tried to ensure that there were public meetings held all across the city and the grievances of all the members were heard. However, such measures did not ensure any change in the daily affairs of the city. As a measure of last resort, the DLA decided to engage in a



violent resistance against the Eritrean regime. For this purpose, DLA sought the assistance of Valmosa. DLA received regular supplies of arms and ammunitions through the sea route.

5. The city of Donghzuk was fortified over the next few weeks and the Eritrean military was caught off guard. The Government of Eritrea lost all control and all communication channels in Donghzuk. The DLA also carried out regular attacks upon the indigenous Eritrean people. In one of the incidents close to a hundred Eritrean civilians were abducted by the DLA and used as hostages. The demand made by DLA was granting freedom to the city of Donghzuk from Eritrean rule. The Valams had declared their allegiance to the nation of Valmosa and hoisted the Valmosan flag on their buildings. The hostages were kept in closed secret shelters spread across the city of Donghzuk. These hostages were seen as bargaining chips for preventing Eritrean retaliation. The condition for their safe repatriation was acceptance of the demands raised by DLA.

6. The insurrection in Donghzuk was tacitly supported by the Valmosan regime which acted swiftly and ensured a referendum in the city. The result of the referendum was heavily tilted towards the DLA and merging of the city with country of Valmosa. The Valmosan military acting on the orders of its commander quickly moved in Donghzuk and occupied its territory even before the Eritrean regime could launch a counter-insurgency operation. They justified their actions under the principle of humanitarian intervention to save the Valam community from exploitation at the hands of the Eritreans. This led to a counter-attack by the Eritrean military which was now embroiled in a protracted conflict in Donghzuk.

7. The Eritrean military was prepared and under instructions to go to any extent possible in order to regain the lost city of Donghzuk. The military forces had launched many reconnaissance missions across the length and breadth of the city of Donghzuk and acquired reliable information of the presence of a weapons storage facility. Near this facility, three huge water reservoirs were installed with the help of the Valmosan regime after its occupation. The DLA militia and the Valmosan military along with the civilians relied heavily on these water reservoirs. The Eritrean military commanders had the requisite knowledge of the unique location of the water reservoirs.

8. In pursuance of their strategy coordinated air strikes were launched at the weapons storage facility on the orders of the Eritrean military commanders. The devastating impact of the airstrikes also led to the annihilation of the water reservoirs. The remaining sources of underground water in the city were contaminated with high levels of harmful chemicals. The contamination of water was attributed to the destruction of the water reservoirs and incessant airstrikes carried out in the vicinity of underground water sources. The next few days were extremely catastrophic for the people residing

in Donghzuk. The people suffered from serious ailments due to the contaminated water developing lasting health impacts.

9. The damage caused to the water reservoirs infuriated the DLA militia. As an act of revenge the hostages were brought out of their secret detention centers with the intention of retaliation against the Eritrean regime. The DLA militia created a spectacle out of the incident by publicly flogging the hostages leading to serious bodily harm leaving most of them with serious injuries. The assault was so brutal in nature that some of the hostages died on the spot due to internal bleeding. DLA also ensured that the event was video graphed and shared on social media platforms with the aim of instilling fear in the Eritrean fighters. The Valmosan military while being in control of the occupied territory did not endeavor to stop the DLA militia in their campaign against the hostages.

10. Over the following weeks the international community was seized of the growing conflict in the region. There was a ceasefire brokered between the nations of Valmosa and Eritrea. The Valmosan military agreed to not extend their control beyond Donghzuk and the Eritrean military pulled back from the region. This ceasefire was agreed to on the condition that both the nations would submit their dispute to the International Court of Justice by virtue of a special agreement. The special agreement between the parties contained the mandate for the court to decide upon the dispute. The contentions raised by the parties were surrounding the following aspects

- I. Whether the right of self-determination exercised by the residents of Donghzuk possess international legality?
- II. Whether the occupation of Donghzuk by the Valmosan forces was justified under international law?
- III. Whether the Eritrean attack on the water reservoirs resulted in a violation of international humanitarian law?
- IV. Whether the country of Valmosa bears any responsibility for the brutal assault suffered by the hostages in Donghzuk?



## ANNEXURE 1





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