

Houston Area Model United Nations Standard Committee

SOCHUM



Chair | Nini Dang

Topic A: Child Trafficking and its Effects
on War

Houston Area Model United Nations 50
February 6 & 7, 2025

Note to Delegates

Howdy Delegates,

My name is Nini Dang and I'm super excited to be your chair for this year's committee. I am currently in school to become a doctor of Physical Therapy and I recently graduated with a Political Science degree from the University of Houston. I've been doing Model UN since my freshman year of high school and I've loved it ever since. HAMUN has been one of my favorite experiences so I hope I can make it as great as I can for all of you. This will be my fifth HAMUN as a chair so I hope that this experience will help you learn new skills, make new friends, or interest you further in national issues and finding solutions to our world's current issues. I'm very happy to be able to meet everyone in person as well as share the University of Houston with you. This conference is what you make of it so do your research, get out of your comfort zones and more importantly; have fun! If you have any questions before the conference or need advice, don't hesitate to contact me. I'm looking forward to it!

Nini Dang

Chair of SOCHUM

nini1dang@gmail.com





SOCHUM

Chair | Nini Dang

Houston Area Model United Nations 50

3

Background Information

The Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM) is also known as the third Committee of the General Assembly. Founded in 1947 at the inception of the United Nations General Assembly, it focuses on the social and humanitarian affairs of the general world population. All 193 member states of the United Nations General Assembly are considered members of the third Committee. As such, SOCHUM is neatly positioned to discuss and make recommendations on global issues since it is representative of the international opinion. SOCHUM addresses the rights, status, and treatment of vulnerable world populations. This includes, but is not limited to, the defence of children, empowerment and improvement in the lives of and opportunities for women, the treatment and survival of indigenous peoples, and an

elimination of racial discrimination that leads to an unequal society. The committee's jurisdiction extends beyond these groups to populations needing social assistance including, but not limited to children, elders, those with disabilities, and incarcerated persons. The committee also discusses the international criminal justice system, improved methods for crime prevention, and the international drug problem. SOCHUM's keen interest in human rights issues led to the establishment of the UN Human Rights Council in 2006. As of 2014, the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee had over fifty outreach programs that address specific geographic and cultural issues as part of the Human Rights Council across the world. Because of their far reach, often intensive manpower and need for specific expertise, these special rapporteurs can place financial strain on the committee. Considered one of the most effective outreaches of this

committee, the special rapporteurs include on-the-ground assistance for developing areas, programs for technological advancement and infrastructure, as well as the collection of independent, non-United Nations human rights inquiries. The Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee is a resolution-based committee. Historically, the third Committee has produced many landmark documents including the Universal Declaration on Human Rights created in a post-World War II world, this document as served as a legal document though it lacks actual legal power for implementation. It serves as a tremendous example of the lasting power this committee can have on wide-ranging vulnerable populations throughout the world. Recently, SOCHUM has affected change on the issue of female genital mutilation by calling for its end, providing support programs for its victims and recommending punishments for those inflicting it. The third Committee also recommended the recognition of

Palestine as an observer without voting privileges member of the General Assembly. During the 2014 session, SOCHUM discussed over 70 draft resolutions of which a majority were on human rights issues. Of these human rights draft resolutions, three discussed country-specific human rights concerns. Currently, SOCHUM is considering a multitude of draft resolutions. Those related to women include the elimination of violence against women as well as the trafficking of women and girls. Regarding children, there are draft resolutions on a child's rights, bullying and violence against children, migrant children, and the marriage of children. Criminal justice topics have included the issue of disappeared persons, executions, the death penalty, and minimum treatment rules for prisoners. Crime prevention has included a general discussion on future crime prevention and laws. Lastly, discussion on treatment of refugees has centred around general human rights and human rights in a global world.



Statement of the Issue

SOCHUM will be debating the topic of child trafficking and its significant effect on wars.. Around the world, each day, children go missing, are taken from homes, transported across borders. This topic is a broad one, certainly, and within it there exists a myriad of issues such as drug abuse, child abuse, parental abduction and the list could continue onward. Here, in SOCHUM, we will work from the child's perspective, debating and negotiating to create a framework that can best improve the lives of children affected on a whole by problems such as these. The issue of child trafficking is a global, local, and personal problem simultaneously. It does not distinguish by class, race, or geographic boundaries. In that sense, it is a crucial, truly international issue for the United Nations to tackle. Working with a particularly vulnerable population, children, this committee stands to truly make a difference in the lives of children. Too many futures are stifled by ineffective laws and a lack of global cooperation around the protection of children. According to the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, eight million children will go missing this year and two million more will be victims of sexual exploitation. As Dr. Franz B. Humer, Chairman of the Board of the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (ICMEC), writes, "This crisis is large, growing and underappreciated – and the global community's response is not adequate to reverse this horrifying trend." It will require global cooperation and a commitment to spend money and support outside organizations to combat this growing global issue. As this committee approaches this topic, it is crucial to determine the ways in which this issue should be tackled. This approach is a traditional one. It has been used with varied degrees of success throughout the history of the United Nations. A resolution regarding this issue, when approached from a human rights issue, would be similar to other documents also produced by the United Nations such as The Hague Convention or the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In this case, the committee would closely rely on the UN Declaration of Human Rights to define the problem. SOCHUM will also be dealing with how, countries can prevent Child trafficking which involves child prostitution or children exploited sexually, children used as a medium for transporting illicit substances across borders, children made to fight in wars and children used to carry out certain age appropriate tasks or forcefully made to work.





Topic A

Human trafficking has been a long-standing problem in many countries, and recently, the trafficking of children has increased, especially in wars and the smuggling of drugs across borders. Children are often targeted because they can be tricked into believing they are helping their families by earning money, only to be sold or used in conflict.

Children aged 10-14 are particularly vulnerable because they are smaller and more agile than adults, making it easier for traffickers to move them across borders. Their smaller size allows them to fit through narrow spaces, like tunnels or barbed wire, which makes them prime targets for drug smugglers and other criminals who want to transport illegal goods.

A case between India and Bangladesh highlights why children are often used to smuggle illegal substances across borders. For example, children as young as 11 have been used to carry drugs into the UAE, a dangerous trend described by customs officers.

The term "mules" is used to describe people, often children, who are forced to carry large amounts of illegal goods. In one method, drugs like Tramadol pills are hidden inside soft toys and carried by children. Since children often bring toys, pillows, and other personal items when traveling, it's easy to hide drugs in these things. Additionally, because of their age, children are less likely to be suspected of smuggling.



Topic A

Certain individuals take advantage of this fact and use children to transport their materials across borders. This particular incident was witnessed at Dubai International Airport in 2016, which was one of a number of cases involving young people exploited by parents and relatives. This could also be a reason for families/relatives or individuals to abduct children as they may want to use them for these certain purposes.

Most child casualties are civilians. But one of the most deplorable developments in recent years has been the increasing use of young children as soldiers. In one sense, this is not really new. For centuries children have been involved in military campaigns—as child ratings on warships, or as drummer boys on the battlefields of Europe. Indeed, the word 'infantry', for foot-soldiers, can also mean a group of young people.

What is frightening nowadays is the escalation in the use of children as fighters. Recently, in 25 countries, thousands of children under the age of 16 have fought in wars.⁸ In 1988 alone, they numbered as many as 200,000. One reason for this is the proliferation of light weapons. In the past, children were not particularly effective as front-line fighters since most of the lethal hardware was too heavy and cumbersome for them to manipulate. A child might have been able to wield a sword or a machete but was no match for a similarly armed adult.

However, a child with an assault rifle, a Soviet-made AK-47 or an American M-16, is a fearsome match for anyone. These weapons are very simple to use. The AK-47 can be stripped and reassembled by a child of 10. The rifles have also become much cheaper and more widely available—having few moving parts they are extremely durable and have steadily accumulated in war zones.



Topic A

Besides being able to use lethal weapons, children have other advantages as soldiers. Children are easier to intimidate and they do as they are told. Children believe adults are more experienced and have lived longer hence know better. Thus, it is easier for adults to control and manoeuvre children according to their will as the chances of children declining a command is very less. In long-drawn-out conflicts children also become a valued resource. Many current disputes have lasted a generation or more—half of those under way in 1993 had been going on for more than a decade. Children who have grown up surrounded by violence see this as a permanent way of life. Alone, orphaned, frightened, bored and frustrated, they will often finally choose to fight. In the Philippines,

who have suffered for decades from a war of insurgency, many children have become soldiers as soon as they enter their teenage years. When schools are closed and families fragmented, there are few influences that can compete with a warrior's life.

At a more basic level, joining an army may also be the only way to survive. Many children joined armed groups in Cambodia in the 1980s as the best way to secure food and protection. Similarly, in Liberia in 1990, children as young as seven were seen in combat because, according to the Director of the Liberian Red Cross, "those with guns could survive." In Myanmar, parents volunteer their children for the rebel Karen army because the guerrillas provide clothes and two square meals a day; in 1990, an estimated 900 of the 5,000-strong Karen Army were under the age of 15.



SOCHUM

Chair | Nini Dang

Houston Area Model United Nations 50

9

Topic A

Your role in the SOCHUM committee is to find solutions that will not only address your country's issues of child trafficking but create solutions to the problem for the United Nations.

Research your country's stance on trafficking and look into possible reasons why and how these communities are being affected.

I'm looking forward to see what you all will come with! Please let me know if you have any questions or how I can help!



Sources

Nations Online Project. (n.d.). *Nations online*. Retrieved November 29, 2024, from <https://www.nationsonline.org/index.html>

BBC News. (n.d.). *Country profiles*. Retrieved November 29, 2024, from http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/country_profiles/default.stm

United Nations. (2016). *Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the organization (A/71/373)*. Retrieved November 29, 2024, from http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/71/373