

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF DRUGS AND CRIME
BACKGROUND GUIDE

INDEX

1. LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

2. BACKGROUND AND MANDATE OF THE UNODC

3. AGENDA INTRODUCTION

I) OVERVIEW

II) BACKGROUND

III) INVOLVEMENT

IV) RELEVANT TREATIES

V) QARMA

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Greetings delegates of the UNODC,

It's a pleasure to serve as your Executive Board for SNISMUN 2021. We hope you understand the important role you play as a delegate in this committee and that our objective is solely to ensure that you consider this an amazing learning experience which hones your leadership skills.

The UNODC has been simulated in the Bangalore circuit before but similar agendas are rarely found. The continuously deteriorating situation in Latin America continues to threaten the safety of many and have only undermined the abilities of the government and there remains a dire need to address this issue adequately.

The Executive Board upholds a strict no-plagiarism policy and we would like you to keep that in mind as well. Also note that the objective of this document is to help and guide you with your research and should not be the only research you possess. Also keep in mind that it cannot be provided as proof to enforce an argument in committee. We do hope you find this guide extremely helpful.

Last but not the least, a committee is only as good as its delegates and we believe that each and every one of you has the potential to excel and lead, first-timer or not. We encourage each and every one of you to speak and participate as it would give us great joy knowing that each delegate walked away from our committee with more knowledge than he or she walked in with and having done so, did not waste three days at this conference.

A word of advice - do look into the technicalities of the agenda and be well-versed with your facts. Being prepared is the key to being confident. We look forward to three days of extensive and productive debate.

Good Luck!

To those of you who might have queries, feel free to contact us or reach out.

Regards,

Aryan R Nair
Co-Chairperson

Algin Thomas
Co-Chairperson

BACKGROUND AND MANDATE OF THE UNODC

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime was established in 1997 as the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention by combining the United Nations International Drug Control Program and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division. Working under the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), The UNODC was established to assist the United Nations in better achieving a coordinated, comprehensive response to the interrelated issues of illicit trafficking in and abuse of drugs, crime prevention and criminal justice, international terrorism, and political corruption, to maximise knowledge about these issues among governmental institutions and agencies, and to maximise awareness about the said matters in public opinion, globally, nationally and at community level.

These goals are pursued through three primary functions: research, guidance and support to governments in the adoption and implementation of various crime-, drug-, terrorism-, and corruption related conventions, treaties and protocols, as well as technical/financial assistance to said governments to face their respective situations and challenges in these fields.

AGENDA

DISCUSSING CARTEL RELATED VIOLENCE AND TRAFFICKING IN LATIN AMERICA

OVERVIEW OF THE AGENDA

Crime within the Latin American region revolve around the ever-growing influence and power of criminal organizations and gangs called Cartels. Such organizations have an array of methods they use to receive their funding mainly through racketeering and trafficking. They manage to stay afloat by abusing the weak justice systems and corrupt governments within the LATAM region especially the Northern Triangle Countries (Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador).

A UNODC report in 2012 stated that the Northern Triangle Countries rank as the most violent countries in the world having the highest homicide rates. This was due to the disruption of the power balance among the local criminal groups triggered by “Mexico’s War on Drugs”. This forced Cartels out of Mexico and created a new demand for a trafficking supply line from LATAM to the USA. The Northern Triangle quickly filled this gap, drastically increasing criminal gang presence and violence in the region. The Cartels began using available funds to extort and bribe local government authorities, often gaining immunity from justice systems.

The further influx of funds allowed these groups to cement and consolidate their position in terms of territory. Subsequently this led to an increase in inter cartel Violence as they fought over Business interests and Territory.

Ultimately, Cartel Violence has had a significant humanitarian impact spanning the majority of LATAM. Communities have deteriorated and the Public have begun to distrust governments. The Economic impact due to the wide-spread extortion and the sheer amount of Money these groups bring in affect everything from businesses to families. There is also forced displacement caused due to the violence, but yet this only makes up a small portion of the overall humanitarian Impact.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Crime within the Latin American region revolve around the ever-growing influence and power of criminal organizations and gangs called Cartels. Such organizations have an array of methods they use to receive their funding mainly through racketeering and trafficking. They manage to stay afloat by abusing the weak justice systems and corrupt governments within the LATAM region especially the Northern Triangle Countries (Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador).

A UNODC report in 2012 stated that the Northern Triangle Countries rank as the most violent countries in the world having the highest homicide rates. This was due to the disruption of the power balance among the local criminal groups triggered by “Mexico’s War on Drugs”. This forced Cartels out of Mexico and created a new demand for a trafficking supply line from LATAM to the USA. The Northern Triangle quickly filled this gap, drastically increasing criminal gang presence and violence in the region. The Cartels began using available funds to extort and bribe local government authorities, often gained immunity from justice systems. The further influx of funds allowed these groups to cement and consolidate themselves. Since the 1950’s most countries within LATAM

have experienced internal turmoil. The development of the drug trade, rapid increase in violence and poor development and infrastructure all which are rooted to the long lasting wars and protests.

Guatemala’s history of civil war started after a US-backed coup that overthrew Jacobo Arbanes, the democratically elected president at that time. Following the coup, rebel groups began attempting to combat the military regime installed to try and fill the power vacuum now present. Violence prevailed until a UN moderated Peace Accord was signed by all parties on 29th December 1996. 200,000 people lost their lives, 40,000 were forcefully displaced and considerable damage was done to rural areas. These factors led to the rise of opportunistic criminal organizations to take advantage and make the most out of the situation at hand.

In 1963 there took place a military coup in Guatemala to which was fuelled by civil – military tensions. It removed the democratically elected president Ramon Villeda and gave way to a series of military regimes, Until a new constitution was set up in 1982 , following which the military regimes lost power. As a result of the civil war the country suffered as poverty and migrant flows out of the country.

El Salvador also fell into a civil war in the 1970’s as the legitimacy of the elections were questioned which gave rise to revolutionary movements. These revolutionary

movements quickly evolved as the army began backing right wing “death squads” who then killed tens of thousands of citizens. In protest, the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) had evolved into a Guerrilla force that fought the civil war against the army which left 75,000 dead. Peace Accords were signed in 1992 but by that time hundreds of thousands had left the country and the real per capita income had declined by 25% with 57% falling below the poverty line.

As a consequence to the seemingly everlasting conflict, the governments have been weakened and their citizens had become desperate. This left the perfect space for criminal organizations (Gangs and Cartels) to take advantage and seize power. Gangs like MS-13 have roots in external mafia organizations and had the resources to draw from and quickly seize territory and power. One of the key reasons for the sudden rise of gang crime and activity is their adaptive flexibility, they change and adapt to new laws, territories and markets. Inter Cartel violence can also prove catastrophic as these gangs are well armed and the overall violence between these gangs are some of the greatest contributing factors to the high homicide rates and the ever-increasing rates of displacement in the LATAM region.

The Humanitarian impacts of this violence in most LATAM countries are far spread and very complex. The greater humanitarian impact can be broken up into Educational, Economic and social impact as well as the issue of forced displacement. Overall the humanitarian impact feeds into empowering the gangs and criminal organizations that damage the LATAM region. The lack of support for the citizens causes them to rely on organized crime for support, which in turn exploits them for its own gain, inevitably growing more and more. Properly providing support and solutions for the citizens will weaken the grasp organized crime has over the region and will significantly better the situation.

r position in terms of territory. Subsequently this led to an increase in inter cartel Violence as they fought over Business interests and Territory.

Ultimately, Cartel Violence has had a significant humanitarian impact spanning the majority of LATAM. Communities have deteriorated and the Public have begun to distrust governments. The Economic impact due to the wide-spread extortion and the sheer amount of Money these groups bring in affect everything from businesses to families. There is also forced displacement caused due to the violence, but yet this only makes up a small portion of the overall humanitarian Impact.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras (The Northern Triangle) :

These are the three key countries that make up the Northern Triangle. All three have been through various stages of political unrest and violence that have allowed criminal organizations to seize power and consolidate their positions. Events like the Mexican war on drugs have made these nations key routes for the Central American to North American drug trade and have ultimately led to the situation we now face in the Northern Triangle.

United States of America :

The USA was the first country to openly announce a “war on drugs” as well as the only country to go “head to head” with cartels within another nation's borders. Although America's War on drugs did increase drug traffic into America for a time, it also showed how effective, and simultaneously dangerous, aggressive policies can be if implemented properly when tackling large syndicates like Cartels. So far the US has poured funding into NT countries to carry out violence prevention initiatives and community development, which have significantly helped the nations develop. However at the same time the US has also instigated mass deportation and harsh anti-immigration policies against NT countries without taking into account the impact they have on asylum seekers.

Mexico :

Mexico launched a war on drugs in 2006, which ultimately led to the uprising of street gangs and drug crime within the NT. Despite the goal of the war on drugs being to reduce the influx of drug trafficking and tackle drug crime, it was considerably ineffective. Mexico had also dealt with issues such as the cooperation between the street gangs of the Northern Triangle and the Mexican Cartels; this cooperation has caused significant trouble for the Mexican war on drugs.

Nicaragua, Panama and Costa Rica:

Central America has been heavily affected by the violence in the Northern Triangle. As the violence itself seeps into the surrounding nations so do the humanitarian impacts. In Central America, Nicaragua, Panama and Costa Rica are most affected, as citizens of the Northern Triangles' nations are forced to leave their home as asylum seekers. These countries are the largest recipients of asylum seekers; the influence in the past years has been so large that it's been likened to that of a War.

Various Cartels and Street Gangs :

Organized crime in Central America was one of the major catalysts for the spike in crime and violence across the Northern Triangle. In 2006 the Latin American and Mexican cartels' routes were damaged due to the Mexican war on drugs. Since then the street gangs of NT countries took advantage of the gap in the market and soon enough were funding themselves off of 'drug money' and slavery. These gangs however compete with each other over territory and smuggling routes, a competition that often turns to deadly gunfights within the cities of the NT, and inevitably strains the nations' resources and impacts civilian life. Such gangs like the Los Mendozas and the Los Lorenzanas are well armed and when provoked start gunfights, and even engage in kidnapping. However, it is important to remember that they do act as their own enterprises and thus can be brokered with.

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES & EVENTS

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Crime (enforced as of 29th September 2003; adopted 2000 in resolution 55/25)

This convention aimed to be a starting point and a main instrument in the fight against transnational crime. It is essentially a guide and a call to arms against issues such as the trafficking of women and children, the smuggling of migrants, and the illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms, their parts, and ammunition. This convention is vital as it provides the guidelines on how to restrict a lot of the crime in the northern triangle as well as effectively deal with the supply of weapons to the gangs.

The United Nations Handbook on Practical Anti-Corruption Measures

Over recent years several cases of corrupt government officials have surfaced. This convention marks a significant step forward in cooperation against corruption and provides tools and effective solutions that may prove pivotal in tackling corrupt governments or governments prone to extortion and bribery like those of Latin America.

The Treaty between MS-13 and MS-18

This treaty was brokered in 2012 between two major Salvadoran gangs, and temporarily brought a ceasefire between the two extremely violent gangs. It was effectively a proof of concept and caused homicide rates to drop from 14 to 5 deaths per day. It still stands as one of the key examples to how peace may be achieved in Latin America.

The Mexican War on Drugs

Mexico's war on drugs is an active effort to directly tackle drug cartels and trafficking by targeting the sources of the narcotics and the head of the cartels. Unfortunately, its success has been questionable due to the high homicide rates produced by this counter narcotics effort.

QARMA

(QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER)

1. What are the methods which can be taken to stop the easy spread and trafficking of drugs?
2. What Measures can be taken to reduce the funding received by these cartels?
3. What can be done to curb the violence caused due to these cartels which pose a major risk to innocent civilians?
4. Propose successful solutions to the economic, social and political predicaments caused due to illicit trafficking which includes the effects of the actions of such NSA's.
5. How big a role does the United States of America play in this situation?
6. What amendments and recommendations could be suggested to the committee in order to update the present legal statutes which deal with drug trafficking?
7. What is the modus operandi of Cartels in Latin America and what can be done to disrupt it?