



ROYAL MUN

Social, Cultural, & Humanitarian Committee (SOCHUM)

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Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. Welcome

1.2. About SOCHUM

2. Information

2.1. Topic

2.2. Historical Context

2.3. Relevant Dates

2.4. Current Situation

2.5. Guide Questions

2.6. Relevant Information

3. Sources



1.1. Welcome

Dear Delegates,



Welcome to the inaugural session of the SOCHUM committee at the CRRSMUN. It is our pleasure as presidents, Juan Pablo Ortiz and Maria José Pupo, to lead you through this committee. We extend our cordial greetings to delegates from around the world who have gathered here for productive talks, agreements, and cooperative problem-solving. Your attendance demonstrates our common commitment to advancing international understanding, diplomacy, and collaboration.

Any doubts or questions are more than welcomed !

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1.2. About SOCHUM

The United Nations General Assembly established the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM) as a vital component within the United Nations Charter, signed by 50 countries in 1946 in California. SOCHUM was created to fulfill its mission and supersede the League Council of the League of Nations, following the failure to prevent the outbreak of the Second World War.

As one of the UN's six organs, SOCHUM is committed to advancing and preserving world peace and security. Setting itself apart from other committees, SOCHUM has a varied membership roster. In contrast to the five permanent members of the Security Council, SOCHUM is made up of nations chosen for two-year mandates, which promotes a flexible and inclusive strategy.

In addition to promoting international collaboration to handle urgent problems including terrorism, WMDs, and human rights violations, SOCHUM plays a crucial role in resolving international conflicts and disputes. The committee meets on a regular basis to discuss and plan actions that protect world peace and security.



3

2.1. Topic A: Tensions of Security and Human Rights: Exploring the Dilemma in the Rise of Maximum Security Prisons in Latin America

The region's increasing number of maximum security jails is one indication of the difficult predicament Latin America faces when it comes to security and human rights. Governments are turning more and more to the construction of high-security prison facilities as a way to address the growing worries that societies have about crime and violence. But the rise of maximum security facilities begs urgent concerns about how to strike a balance between the need for security and the defense of basic human rights.

Strict control mechanisms, cutting-edge monitoring technologies, and enhanced security processes are frequently associated with these institutions. Advocates contend that these steps are required to reduce crime and safeguard the public, but detractors voice concerns about possible violations of human rights in these high-security settings. The difficulties between preserving security and respecting people's rights and dignity are highlighted by the use of widespread surveillance, restrained circumstances, and restricted inmate liberties.

Assessing how well maximum security prisons accomplish their declared objectives while minimizing the harm to human rights is essential in navigating this complex terrain. It is extremely difficult to strike a balance between strict security protocols and individual liberties; legal frameworks, supervisory procedures, and the institutions' overall social



influence must all be carefully taken into account. In order to promote a just and safe society, a thorough examination of the problem with maximum security prisons is essential as Latin America struggles with these conflicts.

4

2.2 Historical Context

Latin American nations experienced rising crime rates, political violence, and organized crime throughout the second half of the 20th century. Maximum security prisons were created in response to house violent offenders, such as drug dealers, gang members, and political dissidents.

These prisons prioritized security above all else. They implemented stringent measures such as high walls, surveillance systems, and restricted inmate movement. The goal was to prevent escapes, violence, and criminal activities within the prison walls.

Over time, concerns arose about the treatment of inmates within these maximum security facilities. Reports of overcrowding, inhumane conditions, and abuse highlighted the violation of prisoners' fundamental human rights. Policymakers faced a dilemma on how to maintain security while respecting human rights. Striking this balance proved difficult. On one hand, ensuring safety for prison staff, other inmates, and society required strict security measures. On the other hand, upholding the dignity, legal protections, and rehabilitation of prisoners demanded a human rights-centered approach.

Currently, countries such as Ecuador join the list of Latin American countries that are part of these new, stricter methods to regulate the conflict. Thus highlighting countries with



maximum security prisons such as the following:

- La Palma (Mexico): La Palma was inaugurated in 1986.
- Altiplano High Security Prison (Mexico): This prison was founded in 1991 in the State of Mexico.
- Cecot (El Salvador): Although its official name is the Terrorism Confinement Center, it was built in 2019 and is known as the Bukele's mega prison.

5

2.3. Relevant Dates (CCW)

February 2023: The 40,000-capacity Terrorism Confinement Center, one of Latin America's largest jails, was opened by El Salvadorian officials during this month. This resulted in a significant increase in the nation's jail capacity.

2008: Costa Rica implemented new laws in this year that raised the maximum prison term from 25 to 50 years. This signaled a dramatic change in the nation's attitude to crime and punishment, following a wider pattern throughout Latin America toward harsher sentencing and a rise in incarceration.

1964: An era of authoritarian governance began in Brazil with the military takeover. Political dissidents were frequently detained in high-security prisons during this period, which reflected the use of prisons as a tool for political control.

1980s: An increase in organized crime and violence was a result of the drug trade's expansion in Mexico during this time. As a result, the government started building maximum-security prisons to house prominent cartel members, signaling a change in strategy toward combating organized crime with stronger security.



2.4. Current Situation

There are several issues currently affecting human rights protection in maximum-security prisons in Latin America, with El Salvador serving as a notable case study. Overcrowding, gang activity, and poor infrastructure are among the key challenges. The situation is aggravated by the difficult social and economic conditions that contribute to the prevalence of gang violence in the region.

According to a report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), El Salvador has one of the highest homicide rates in the world, and gangs like MS-13 and Barrio 18 are active in the country. The gangs often use prisons as bases of operation, and inmates have been known to continue their criminal activities from behind bars.

Additionally, maximum-security prisons in Latin America, including those in El Salvador, are often overcrowded. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), overcrowding is a significant problem in many Latin American prisons, leading to poor living conditions and increased tension among inmates. This overcrowding can also make it difficult for prison staff to maintain order and security.



Furthermore, the infrastructure of maximum-security prisons in Latin America is often outdated and inadequate. Many facilities lack basic amenities, such as proper sanitation and access to medical care. The ICRC reports that some prisons in the region do not meet international standards for the treatment of prisoners.

In response to these challenges, some governments in Latin America have implemented measures to improve conditions in maximum-security prisons. For example, El Salvador has introduced a program called "Yo Cambio", which aims to rehabilitate gang members and reduce recidivism rates. The program provides inmates with access to education, vocational training, and psychological support.

7

Despite these efforts, the issues facing maximum-security prisons in Latin America, inspired by those in El Salvador, remain complex and difficult to address. Long-term solutions will require comprehensive strategies that address the root causes of gang violence, as well as improvements in the infrastructure and management of prisons in the region.

Ecuador's President Daniel Noboa has announced the construction of two maximum-security prisons, inspired by El Salvador's Nayib Bukele, aiming to provide "adequate isolation" for inmates. These prisons will be built in the Amazon and Pacific coast regions, and are expected to be constructed in 10 to 11 months by the same company that built El Salvador's facilities. However, concerns have been raised about their proximity to areas influenced by narcoterrorist groups. The president hopes to separate the most dangerous inmates to reduce the violence in Ecuadorian prisons, which has led to 460 inmate deaths since February 2021.

Meanwhile, in El Salvador, a mega prison opened in Tecoluca in 2023, housing members of gangs Mara Salvatrucha and Barrio 18, but has faced criticism for alleged human rights violations due to the overcrowding and tight controls. Currently, Ecuador's penitentiary



centers hold 31,321 inmates, and Noboa plans to deport around 1,500 foreign inmates, mainly from Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela, to reduce the population.

2.5. Guide Questions

- How do maximum-security prisons address issues of social and economic inequality in Latin America?
- How have political and social upheavals impacted the delicate balance between security measures and individual rights within these high-security detention facilities? - What historical factors drove the establishment of maximum-security prisons in Latin America?

8

- How do international standards and best practices for managing prisons align or conflict with the practices of maximum-security facilities in Latin America? - What are the challenges and potential ethical implications of constructing maximum-security prisons in remote areas to reduce the influence of criminal groups?

2.6. Relevant Information

Certain words such as “war” and “terrorism” are not included in the parliamentary language, however, they can be included if the committee wants through a motion passed by the table.

3. Sources

[UN General Assembly - Third Committee - Social, Humanitarian & Cultural El Salvador: Policies, practices, and abusive, arbitrary legislation violate human rights and threaten civic](#)



[space - Amnesty International](#)

[IACHR presents Report on the Situation of Human Rights in El Salvador](#) [Security at the Expense of Human Rights: The Case of El Salvador's "Megacárcel"](#) [As Latin America's Prison Population Explodes, Gangs Seize Control - The New York Times](#)