

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Background Guide

Model MUN

2023



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A letter from your committee:

Dear delegates,

My most sincere greetings, and welcome to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Let me present myself, my name is Alejandro Campos, and as you may already know i'll be serving as your president. In this committee we will be discussing the important conflict of *Drug control in marginalized Latin American countries* and *The recruitment of children into organized crime and drug trafficking organizations in Mexico*, in order to get viable solutions. I will be at your disposal for any issue, contact me at: alejandro.campos@bab.edu.mx

My name is Gerardo Lopez and I will be serving as your moderator in the UNODC committee where we will discuss the rising problems on drugs in Latin American countries and of course *The recruitment of children into organized crime and drug trafficking organizations in Mexico*. Don't hesitate in contacting me via my mail gerardo.lopez@bab.edu.mx

My name is Santiago Becerra and in this committee I will be your conference officer. We will address various problems regarding the purpose of our committee, the UNODC, such as drug control and child recruitment. if you have any questions contact me at: josesantiagoguillermo.becerra@bab.edu.mx

Introduction

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime or UNODC was established in 1997. As a result of the merging of the United Nations Centre for International Crime Prevention and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, was settled in order to enable a focus and enhance its capacity to address issues of narcotics control, crime and terrorism in all its forms.

The UNODC has a variety of objectives, such as drug addiction treatment, HIV controls, among other important topics regarding the control of illegal substances around the world. UNODC has the mission to improve crime prevention and assist with criminal justice reforms in order to have an improvement in the law of each nation. Mostly this organization has the faculty of advising or assisting several states for implementing diverse and hard rules on the prevention of drug abuse and crime. The committee has 20 field offices that covers more than 150 countries.(UNOV,2023)

One of the main goals of this organization is to educate people on the dangers of consuming illicit substances, as well as being the leading educational hub for avoiding corruption in high level organizations around the world. An important contribution for global education is the program “Education for justice” whose main goal is to promote a culture of lawfulness and prevent crime through activities designed to include the previous problems.

UNODC also works in the assistance of criminal justice in some countries, with the purpose of establishing an efficient and stable system, to avoid the rise of organized crime organizations. An important leap forward in this topic, is the approval, by the general assembly, of an expanded program regarding the prevention of terrorism led obviously by the UNODC.

This organization had the opportunity to work with the United Nations Security Council’s Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, by implementing new prison facilities and over 40 activities to enhance crime and drug prevention in countries like Uganda or Tunisia. (UNODC,2021)

One of the most important drug control programs in the UNODC, is the 2021-2025 Bolivia plan, against the illicit trafficking of control substances and coca cultivation. With the

aim of fighting drug trade and trying to reduce the excess of coca crops through international and regional cooperation.

"Response to Drugs and Related Organized Crime in Nigeria" is a project that began earlier in 2013, with the goal of supporting the Nigerian government on narcotic control, as well as prescription drugs for non medical purposes.

The five main functions of the UNODC are:

- Prevention treatment and care of drug problems, as well as easy access to controlled medication, and strengthening international laws on regards to illegal substances trafficking.
- Effective legal frameworks with the mission of fighting against organized criminal organizations. Increase the education on cybercrimes, improve the data transparency regarding crime.
- Improve the legal policies on corruption, and increase the regional and international cooperation to prevent corruption.
- Effective criminal justice around the world responding to terrorism. Appliance of human rights to prevent terrorist attacks.
- A more effective access to justice, focusing on vulnerable groups. A close relation with local governments to apply reforms on prisoners.

As commented before the UNODC includes more than 100 offices around the world counting with over 2500 workers. Some of the countries that compose this organization are:

- Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
- Argentine Republic
- Republic of Austria (HQ)
- Barbados
- Kingdom of Belgium
- Federal Republic of Brazil
- Republic of Cabo Verde
- Republic of Colombia

- Republioc of Costa Rica
- Dominican Republic
- Republic of Ecuador
- Arab Republic of Egypt
- Republic of El Salvador
- Republic of Guatemala
- Republic of India
- Republic of Indonesia
- Islamic Republic of Iran
- Republic of Kenya
- Lybia
- United Mexican States
- Kingdom of Morroco
- Federal Republic of Nigeria
- Islamic Republic of Pakistan
- Republic of Panama
- Republic of Peru
- Republic of South Africa
- United Arab Emirates
- United States of America

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, has a multi-year program that applies effective and innovative methods, to comply with the 2030 agenda, and meet their goals on drug and crime prevention on a global scale.

Topic A: Drug control in marginalized Latin American countries

Introduction:

Our topic A is *Drug control in marginalized American countries*. Latin America has always been treated as a transit country for drugs, in order to arrive at the main consumers in the market. For example, in regards to cocaine, which is typically transported from Colombia to countries like Mexico, in order to cross the border with the United States. This country remains as a main source for the cocaine consumed in Europe, although the shipments usually come from Peru and the state of Bolivia.

Latin America has a large scale production of methamphetamines, cannabis, heroine, among other harmful drugs. Coca bush and cocaine cultivation are at a record high. The trafficking occurs in all media (sea, land, air)

Regarding drug use, globally 270 million people between the ages of 15-64 years old have been in contact with drugs, more than 35 million people suffered from drug use disorders, and in 2019 more than 580,000 deaths were directly related with the use of drugs. The increasing medical and recreational use of cannabis has obligated countries like Uruguay to partially legalize it in order to reduce the illegal sale of this substance. The highest consumers of cannabis in Latin America are Chile and Jamaica followed by Uruguay, Argentina, Panama, Ecuador, and Bolivia.

Cocaine which was known to be chewed by South American people in the past, and later on was transformed as a medicinal drug, now is widely available as a mortal recreational drug. Nowadays the prevalence of this illicit drug in Latin America is 0.65%, led by Argentina and Uruguay.

Overall drug related mortality in Latin America is a rising problem, however this rate is not higher than the one of OECD where these numbers in comparison are triple. For example, 0.7 out of 100,000 deaths are related to the opioid crisis, however this data is very far from the 4.4 that happen at OECD. Although it's important to acknowledge that the deaths related to cocaine are very similar. (UNODC, 2019)

Historical context

Latin America is a region in America that is composed of all the countries in South America, Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean islands in which a romance language is spoken. Latin America shares mostly a common conqueror back in the conquest, which is Spain (all countries), and Portugal (Brazil).

Throughout history Latin American countries had supplied the United States and the world of drugs and illegal narcotics. Mexico for example has provided illegal alcohol to the United states during prohibition in the 1930's. In the south Colombia swell as Mexico highlights as a country that exports illegal goods all around the world. Some of the illegal drugs that Colombia exports were originally consumed and raised by some indigenous groups in the country, as an example of these drugs we may see marijuana and coca leaves, which were used for ritual and for medical treatments for the groups. The government of Colombia joined the US government in a campaign against drugs in the 70s, which wasn't effective at all. The organizations that were/are in charge of the transport of these illegal substances in both Mexico and Colombia are the Cartels. Cartels are criminal organizations, which are composed by a drug lord who aspires to “conquer” the whole drug market, beside the traffic of drugs these organizations also do other illicit activities such as kidnapping,. As all the organizations Cartels are organized by hierarchies, this means that a great amount of people are involved in these illicit activities. Since 2006 and up to 2021 around 350,00 people have been killed in Mexico thanks to the drug cartels and the “war” against the

Mexican government. In Colombia just the Medellin Cartel was responsible for 3500 deaths during the peak of its activities.

Relevant international action

The United Nations organism specialized in the abolition or reduction of Terrorism among the members involved, has elaborated a 5 year plan that will potentially counter attack this global issue. The parameters of terrorism involve certain subdivisions like corruption, criminal justice, economic crime, and in this specific scenario, “Addressing and countering the world drug problem”. The 5 year plan previously established consists in the implementation of the following reforms or strategies alongside the following mid decade:

- Research about the different connections between the main drug problem inside the different UN involved countries and some aspects about sustainable development, peace and the providing of human rights without exception.
- Provide help to the different countries, or more specifically, states in the approval of different distinct drug policies inside each individual organism.
- Provide different organizations and supported establishments that help with the rehabilitation of patients, treatment, and different therapies that involve the support to people experiencing certain drug involvement issues.
- The drug problems interconnections with transnational organized crime, including cybercrime, corruption, illicit trafficking, financial flows, etc.

These are the main points in the overall action plan that will potentially lead to the organized fighting of drugs and crime. With this being stated, there is still a lot of room for improvement in this area, and to provide a successful solution to the reduction or controlling of narcotics, many solutions may be implemented. In the year 2022, the most recent press conference released a press release with the title “The Container Control Programme highlights success in preventing the exploitation of the global trade supply chain”. Throughout this press release, it was stated the different actions that had been performed that occasioned the seizure of different firearms, ammunition, and (most importantly to our organisms area of study) a high amount of narcotics.

In 2009 a meeting was held at Costa Rica to discuss on the main priorities for action in Latin American countries, leading to the establishment of The "Programa de UNODC para el

reforzamiento del plan de acción de la estrategia de seguridad en Centroamérica y México" requesting UNODC advise and tech assistance to design and implement an efficient answer to the problems of drug trafficking and organized crime.

Analysis

As established before, drug abuse and traffic isn't only a local or regional problem in fact it affects a variety of developed european countries, where consumption is skyrocketing like never before. Latin American countries are sadly one of the main sources of this global drug traffic problem, hence targeting these Latin American countries by affecting their economical, political and social stability, putting at risk the life of people in these territories.

Health systems in latin american countries aren't efficient and in consequence the drug mortality is higher than in developed countries. The large-scale production of illegal substances as mentioned before are at record high, trafficking mainly to the USA, Canada and Europe completely affecting their society. Although it's true that this is a chain problem that should be resolved directly from the main core, so that other nations will stop being affected by this.

Possible solutions:

UNODC has a number of programs in order to find solutions for this problem:

- Implementation of programs for assisting South and Central American platforms, with a main focus on 4 points: integrity systems, liability of legal entities, whistleblowing protection and of course global cooperation.
- Continue the support of the UNODC member states, focusing on 3 main topics: monitoring reports and cross-country info sharing mechanisms on the trends of illicit drug production. Creation of mechanisms to mitigate the possible effects of non-psychoactive substances. Enhanced monitoring of cocaine production sites and points of delivery or traffic.
- Continue strengthening the capacity of law enforcement and the facilitation of global or regional cooperation, enhancing responses to drug trafficking and consumption, with a

specialized promotion on the rule of law. As well as border protection efforts on all possible ways (land, air and sea) which can led to the reduction of crimes against the law in this aspect,

- Provide a viable economical solution to agricultural communities giving alternative to growing cocaine or illicit crops, addressing the problem from the main source of production.
- Cooperation with security agencies like INTERPOL for information sharing and a global operation.
- Give support to the safe, responsible and green handling of the seized drugs through assistance activities and a partnership with public or private for disposal or recycling of chemicals in these drugs.

Topic B: The recruitment of children into organized crime and drug trafficking organizations in Mexico.

- Introduction

The recruitment of children and adolescents by organized crime and drug trafficking organizations in Mexico is a serious and pressing issue that threatens the safety and well-being of Mexico's society. This issue is defined by the exploitation of vulnerable youth for criminal purposes such as drug trafficking, theft, and violence. The phenomenon has long been a persistent problem in Mexico, and it has only become more complex and challenging over time. The importance of this issue cannot be overstated. The recruitment of children by criminal organizations is a violation of human rights and poses a significant challenge to Mexico's social fabric. The practice has grave consequences for the victims, their families, and society as a whole.

- Historical context

The recruitment of children into organized crime and drug trafficking organizations in Mexico has been a long-standing issue. In the 1960s, drug trafficking began to take root in Mexico, and over the years, it has become a significant criminal enterprise. As the drug trade grew, so did the demand for labor, which led to an increase in the recruitment of children and adolescents into the business.

The recruitment of children has become more widespread and organized in recent years.

Children as young as 11 years old are being recruited by criminal organizations to perform various tasks, including drug trafficking, kidnapping, and murder. These children are often from impoverished backgrounds and are vulnerable to exploitation due to their circumstances.

The evolution of crime groups in Mexico has made the recruitment of children even more complex. The traditional hierarchies of drug cartels have shifted, and smaller, more localized groups have emerged, making it harder to track and combat child recruitment. These groups also operate in areas with weak government presence, making it easier to recruit and operate without fear of being caught.

Mexico is not the only country facing this issue. Countries like Colombia, Brazil, and Honduras have also been struggling with child recruitment by criminal organizations. In these countries, children are often used as soldiers in armed conflicts, making them vulnerable to physical and emotional abuse.

Overall, the recruitment of children into organized crime and drug trafficking organizations in Mexico is a serious and complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach to address effectively.

- Relevant international action

Several international treaties and conventions address the issue of child recruitment, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and the Palermo Protocol. These treaties call for the protection of children from exploitation and abuse and for the prosecution of those who violate their rights.

International organizations such as UNICEF, the International Labor Organization (ILO), and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) are involved in combating child recruitment. UNICEF works to ensure that children's rights are protected and that they have access to education and other opportunities. The ILO focuses on eliminating child labor and promoting decent work for all. INTERPOL collaborates with law enforcement agencies worldwide to prevent and combat transnational organized crime, including the recruitment of children.

In Mexico, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has been working with the Mexican government to address the issue of child recruitment. The UNODC has been providing technical assistance and support to the Mexican authorities in developing and implementing policies and programs to prevent the recruitment of children and protect their rights. The United States government has also provided funding and support for anti-child recruitment programs in Mexico.

Despite these efforts, the issue of child recruitment in Mexico persists. There is a need for more coordinated international action and for increased resources and funding to combat this issue effectively.

- Countries/Organizations directly involved

The recruitment of children into organized crime and drug trafficking organizations in Mexico involves several countries and organizations, including:

- Mexican government: The Mexican government has taken several steps to address the issue of child recruitment, including passing legislation to criminalize child recruitment, increasing penalties for those who recruit or use children in criminal activities, and creating specialized units to investigate cases of child recruitment. However, the effectiveness of these measures has been limited due to corruption, weak institutions, and a lack of resources.

- Non-governmental organizations: Several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Mexico are working to combat child recruitment by providing education and vocational training to at-risk

youth, supporting victims of recruitment, and advocating for stronger legal protections for children. Examples of these NGOs include Reinserta, Save the Children, and Casa Alianza.

- Criminal organizations: Various criminal organizations are involved in the recruitment of children, including drug trafficking organizations such as the Sinaloa Cartel, Los Zetas, and the Gulf Cartel. These organizations use different tactics to recruit children, such as coercion, threats, and promises of financial rewards.

- Analysis

The recruitment of children into organized crime and drug trafficking organizations in Mexico is a complex issue with far-reaching consequences. This section will provide an analysis of the causes and consequences of child recruitment by criminal organizations, as well as the socioeconomic factors that contribute to this issue. Additionally, the impact of child recruitment on society and the economy will be discussed.

There are several factors that contribute to the recruitment of children by criminal organizations in Mexico. Poverty, lack of educational opportunities, and social exclusion are some of the most significant factors. Children from low-income families are particularly vulnerable to recruitment, as they are often forced to drop out of school and seek employment at an early age. Criminal organizations exploit these vulnerabilities by offering them financial incentives, a sense of belonging, and protection from violence.

The consequences of child recruitment by criminal organizations are severe and long-lasting. Children who are recruited into these organizations are exposed to violence, drug addiction, and sexual exploitation. They are forced to commit crimes and often end up in prison or die in violent confrontations with law enforcement or rival gangs. Even those who manage to leave these organizations face significant challenges, including social stigma, psychological trauma, and limited opportunities for reintegration into society.

The socioeconomic factors that contribute to the recruitment of children by criminal organizations in Mexico are complex and interconnected. Poverty is one of the most significant factors, as it limits access to education, healthcare, and other basic needs. Children from poor families are more likely to drop out of school and engage in activities that put them at risk of recruitment.

Lack of educational opportunities is another factor that contributes to child recruitment. Children who are unable to access quality education are more likely to drop out of school and seek employment at an early age. They are also more susceptible to being lured into criminal activities by promises of financial gain and protection.

Social exclusion is another significant factor contributing to the recruitment of children by criminal organizations. Children who live in marginalized communities with limited access to basic services and opportunities are more likely to be recruited. These communities are often characterized by high levels of violence, crime, and drug addiction, making them fertile ground for recruitment.

The impact of child recruitment on society and the economy is significant and long-lasting.

Children who are recruited into criminal organizations are more likely to engage in violent and criminal activities, contributing to the overall insecurity and instability of society. They are also more likely to suffer from mental health issues, including anxiety and depression, which can have a negative impact on their ability to contribute to society.

In economic terms, the recruitment of children by criminal organizations has a significant impact on the productivity and competitiveness of the Mexican economy. Children who drop out of school and engage in criminal activities are less likely to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to participate in the formal economy. Additionally, the violence and insecurity generated by criminal organizations create an unfavorable business environment, discouraging investment and hindering economic growth.

Overall, the recruitment of children into organized crime and drug trafficking organizations in Mexico has significant social and economic implications. Addressing this issue will require a multifaceted approach that addresses the root causes of the problem, including poverty, lack of education, and social exclusion. It will also require the involvement of all stakeholders, including the government, civil society, and the private sector.

- Possible solutions

There is no easy solution to the complex issue of child recruitment by criminal organizations, but several measures can be taken to mitigate the problem.

Government policy interventions, such as tougher laws and stricter enforcement of existing laws, can help prevent and deter child recruitment by criminal organizations. Additionally, the government could invest in social programs targeting vulnerable youth to provide them with opportunities for education, employment, and healthy activities.

Education and awareness campaigns can also play a crucial role in preventing child recruitment by criminal organizations. These campaigns could target at-risk communities and educate parents, teachers, and youth about the dangers of getting involved in criminal activities.

Strengthening law enforcement and judicial systems is also essential to address child recruitment

by criminal organizations. This includes improving the training of law enforcement officers and judges to better investigate and prosecute these crimes.

Moreover, the government could work with non-governmental organizations to provide support services to victims of child recruitment. These services could include counseling, healthcare, and job training to help victims reintegrate into society.

Ultimately, a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of child recruitment, such as poverty, inequality, and lack of opportunities, is necessary to prevent and reduce this issue.

In conclusion, the recruitment of children into organized crime and drug trafficking organizations is a serious problem in Mexico that has far-reaching consequences for society and the economy.

The historical context reveals that this issue is not unique to Mexico and that other countries have faced similar challenges.

International efforts to address the problem have focused on implementing treaties and conventions, strengthening international organizations, and collaborating with the Mexican government and non-governmental organizations.

The analysis shows that the root causes of child recruitment are multifaceted and complex, including poverty, inequality, lack of opportunities, and a culture of violence. The impact of child recruitment is also significant, as it perpetuates the cycle of violence, fuels organized crime, and undermines the social fabric of communities.

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