



Colegio Franciscano

San Luis Rey

Armenia Quindío

Academic Guide

President: Valentina Gonzalez Mejia

The honorable chair is constituted by

Valentina Gonzalez Mejia

The Honorable Chair, President Valentina, of the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM), possesses extensive and consolidated experience in the field of Model United Nations, having taken part in more than ten UN models. This trajectory has resulted in the accumulation of significant expertise and the attainment of distinguished recognitions, including “Best Delegate,” “Outstanding Delegate,” “Best Position Paper,” “Best Portfolio,” and “Best Prepared.” The mandate of the Honorable Chair is to guarantee the proper conduct of the committee’s proceedings, to promote constructive dialogue, to encourage the presentation of structured, diverse, and assertive perspectives, and to ensure that deliberations remain directed toward the pursuit of viable and innovative solutions to the matters under consideration. It must be underscored to all delegations, representatives, and participants that the Honorable Chair will be present throughout the entirety of the sessions to address inquiries. Such interventions may concern the codes of procedure, the maintenance of decorum, or any element essential to the orderly and effective development of the plenary.

Greeting Letter

Honorable delegates and distinguished attendees receive a warm and fraternal welcome from your honorable chair to this remarkable Model United Nations (SLRMUN VIII). For the Sanluisista community, it is a true honor to welcome you with open arms to the eighth edition of our Model United Nations. This event is the reflection of dedicated work transmitted through generations passionate about conflict resolution, public speaking, and debate, but above all, about the richness of diverse perspectives. Such diversity has allowed us contribute to the growth and prestige of our committees. The creation of SLRMUN VIII has been guided by the pursuit of the common good and harmonious coexistence, as every detail has been designed with the well-being and comfort of our honorable delegates in mind. Without doubt, each one of you will bring forth your best qualities in our debates, demonstrating your admirable commitment to social, political, cultural, religious, and economic matters, as well as your awareness of the global impact these generate. We eagerly anticipate the days of debate ahead, along with the presence of all of you in our committees, where knowledge, learning, and your exceptional abilities will come to life. We extend our deepest gratitude for the genuine interest you have shown in our model and in the global challenges that concern us all. The international community is privileged to count on individuals such as yourselves, committed to continuous development and the common good. You may rest assured that our committee, from the Honorable chair, shall be guided at all times by neutrality, dedication, commitment, and rigor.



Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Committee

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Introduction

The Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly (SOCHUM) is one of the six main bodies of the General Assembly, tasked with addressing issues of a social, humanitarian, and human rights character. Its institutional role is centered on the examination of reports and matters directly linked to the promotion and safeguarding of human rights, the application of humanitarian law, and the question of the self-determination of peoples. As part of its mandate, SOCHUM acts as a deliberative organ, where states evaluate humanitarian concerns and human rights situations, producing resolutions that, although not legally binding, possess strong normative and political weight. These outcomes contribute to the shaping of international standards and reinforce the United Nations' commitment to the protection of human dignity within the framework of international peace and security.

The Committee operates as a forum that reflects the intersection between state sovereignty and the universality of human rights. Its deliberations are embedded within the larger institutional design of the General Assembly, where discussions serve not only as a means of coordination among member states but also as a foundation for the progressive development of international law. Thus, SOCHUM embodies the United Nations' mission to integrate humanitarian concerns into the multilateral system, ensuring that the promotion of justice and equity remains a core element of international cooperation.

Objectives

The primary objectives of SOCHUM are structured around three essential dimensions of international governance. First, the Committee seeks to promote and protect human rights globally, serving as the institutional mechanism through which the General Assembly examines reports from relevant bodies, such as the Human Rights Council, and evaluates situations that require multilateral attention. Second, it addresses humanitarian questions, including matters linked to refugees, displaced persons, and the application of humanitarian law, thereby reinforcing the role of the United Nations in safeguarding vulnerable populations in contexts of conflict and crisis. Third, SOCHUM is responsible for issues concerning the right of peoples to self-determination, particularly in contexts where such rights remain central to the realization of international peace and security.

Collectively, these objectives highlight the Committee's function as a central platform within the United Nations for the advancement of normative frameworks related to human rights and humanitarian law. By channeling deliberations and recommendations to the General Assembly, SOCHUM contributes to strengthening the international community's capacity to respond to systemic challenges and to affirm the indivisibility of human rights in contemporary international relations.



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Member states

Republic of El Salvador

Republic of India

Vatican City

Republic of South Africa

Republic of Lebanon

Republic of Ruanda

Introduction to the topic Cultural Vs universal perspectives on human Rights

Within the framework of the United Nations, human rights discussions frequently encounter the tension between universalist and cultural relativist perspectives. On one side, universalism asserts that rights are inherent to all individuals, transcending cultural, religious and political boundaries. This vision is embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948, which remains the cornerstone of international human rights law. On the other side, cultural relativism highlights the diversity of traditions, values and belief systems across nations, arguing that these must be considered when interpreting and implementing human rights.

The universalist tradition finds its intellectual roots in Enlightenment thought, emphasizing equality, rationality, and individual liberty. These principles informed the drafting of post-World War II instruments designed to safeguard dignity and prevent future atrocities. Conversely, cultural relativism gained prominence in the twentieth century, particularly through anthropology, as a result of ethnocentrism. Postcolonial contexts reinforced this stance, with many nations pointing out that universalist frameworks often reflected Western ideals imposed during colonial rule.

Deepening of the Subtopic: Role of religious doctrine in human rights

Religious doctrine has historically shaped moral frameworks, legal systems, and social norms, making its role in human rights a subject of recurring debate within the United Nations. Many of the values that underpin universalist conceptions of rights, such as human dignity, justice and solidarity, find echoes in religious traditions, including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism. For example, the concept of the inherent worth of the individual resonates both with the Enlightenment philosophy that informed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and with theological traditions that emphasize the sanctity of human life. Thus, religious doctrines often serve



as sources of legitimacy for human rights discourses at the national and international levels.

However, tensions arise when religious teachings are interpreted in ways that conflict with universal standards. Issues such as gender equality, sexual orientation, freedom of belief, and reproductive rights are particularly sensitive. Certain states invoke religious doctrine to argue for cultural relativism, maintaining that global human rights instruments must respect religiously based legal systems. Others insist that universal norms must prevail to ensure equal protection for all individuals regardless of religious affiliation. This tension illustrates how religion can be mobilized both to support universality, by rooting rights in moral traditions and to challenge universality, by limiting rights in accordance with religious prescriptions.

Deepening of the subtopic: Ethics in Violence, justifying violations of human rights

The relationship between ethics and violence represents one of the most complex dilemmas in the human rights discourse. While human rights frameworks categorically prohibit practices such as torture, extrajudicial killings, and collective punishment, states and non-state actors have often attempted to justify violations by appealing to ethical arguments grounded in necessity, security, or collective welfare. This tension exposes the fragility of human rights norms when confronted with political violence, armed conflict, and counterterrorism policies.

From a philosophical standpoint, some traditions, such as just war theory, have historically provided criteria for determining whether violence may be morally permissible. Concepts like proportionality, last resort, and protection of non-combatants were developed to regulate armed conflict. However, in contemporary practice, these principles are frequently invoked to rationalize actions that contravene international law, including targeted killings, mass surveillance, and indefinite detention. States often argue that exceptional circumstances, such as threats to national security or public order, warrant temporary restrictions on rights. Yet, international instruments such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) strictly limit the scope of derogations, underscoring that certain rights, such as the right to life and freedom from torture, are non-derogable.

Guiding Questions

1. To what extent should the principle of universality, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), take precedence over cultural traditions and national legal frameworks?
2. How can states balance respect for cultural identity with their international obligations to uphold human rights standards?
3. To what extent is it considered to loose cultural identity?
4. What is the limit between rules and respect of government sovereignty?



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Oratorio

5. What is the dominant religion of the delegation? Does the church has political power?
6. Is the religious doctrine completely opposed to the universality of human rights?
7. How can the universal human rights maintain actual? How can it address upcoming challenges?
8. How should SOCHUM and the United States address areas such as gender equality, freedom of belief or sexual orientation?
9. Can international law accommodate religious diversity without compromising the principle of equal protection for all?
10. Does the delegation has any history of genocides, tortures or acts of violence? How was it justified or penalized?
11. Under what circumstances, if any, can states legitimately restrict or suspend human rights in the name of national security or public order?

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