



**Committee: General Assembly**  
**Topic: Strengthening National Human Rights Institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean**  
**Chair: Diego Ancer Garza**  
**Moderator: Viviana Almaguer Cepeda**

## **Introduction**

Founded in 1945 under the Charter of the United Nations, The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), is the main organ of the Vital Decisions Organization. As confirmed by the principal member states, the committee discusses the multilateral debate on international issues the United Nations covers.

From September to December each year, the Assembly holds scheduled sessions. Within these sessions, the committee considers various distinct problems through a dedicated and focused agenda of items or sub-items, including a great number of reports from various committees. During the earlier months of January to September, the assembly is committed to discussing problems of demanding importance in highly issued debates.

During each session, all the 193 participant states in the Assembly count with one vote. When discussing relevant issues, the Assembly requires a two-thirds majority of the votes from member states. During minor concerns, the Assembly only requires a simple majority vote.

The General Assembly can also initiate humanitarian, legal, social, and political actions, as well as recommendations to the state. The assembly has specific goals to follow like the promotion of peace, security, and weapon disarmament, along with the development of poverty alleviation.

According to the Charter of the United Nations, the General Assembly can proceed with the following:

- Approve the budget of the United Nations committees and elected member states
- Make recommendations on the fundamentals of cooperation for the preservation of international peace and security
- Research and discuss any concerns related to international peace
- Suggest proposals to encourage peaceful resolutions of any situation that could damage cordial relationships among delegations.
- Consider reports from the Security Council and other United Nations committees.

Additionally, according to the Uniting for Peace resolution of 1950, in case of a global threat like aggression between delegations; the committee can take action.

To discuss the problem, we must first define the current human rights violations in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries have suffered serious consequences of constitutional freedom, equality under the law, and human rights. Latin America and the Caribbean have become polestars of the Pandemic.

Among the governments' public health interventions, essential rights have been illegally overstepped:

Including the basic right to freedom of mobility, complete health care access as a human right, and the human right to assemble.

Public trust and social cooperation have diminished within Latin America and the Caribbean.

- More than 1,200 individuals were apprehended for curfew violations in El Salvador, triggering a debate on the legality of the extremist and unlawful use of the military and police force within the country.
- The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and the United Nations were forced to intervene in Honduras when limitations on freedom of speech were implemented in the country. According to the President, this was a mandatory sacrifice to combat the spread of misinformation.
- In Bolivia, excessively open and unclearly defined charges for “misinformation” and “encouraging unlawful behavior towards health” have been accepted as legally worthy of a prison sentence. The IACHR’s ambassadorial record-keeper on Freedom of Speech, Irene Khan, has called to remove these charges.

Vulnerable groups within societies are enduring inequalities at the highest levels. Incomplete health services and informal labor have resulted in the pandemic hitting these individuals the hardest.

- Women, the major workforce in economic sectors, are burdened with giving extra care to the sick.

- Elders and individuals with disabilities must weather an elevated risk of death from contracting the virus.
- Refugees, migrants, native peoples, and people of African ancestry, are also under duress due to a shortage of shelters on the pretense of public health reasons.

## **Development**

Conflicts in Latin America and the Caribbean are heavily related to poor institutions, widespread poverty, non-recognition of identities, and extreme poverty, as said by the Regional Observatory of Conflict.

As shown with data, the countries with the highest rates of femicide, hate crimes, and limitations of freedom of speech are in the Latin American region. Some examples of the latter are the students' oppression. In various countries like Honduras, Nicaragua, and Mexico. Peaceful protests have created conflicts among authorities, resulting in the criminalization of students exercising their freedom of speech. Most of these acts have had violent outcomes, resulting in deaths from all parties. As a precedent, in 2018, in Nicaragua, there was a demonstration of students demanding democratic reforms in the government as well as 6% of the national budget to be distributed to National universities. On April 20th one student was killed by the police, they arrested 77, and 22 people were left wounded.

Furthermore, the limitation on freedom of speech is also reflected in the assassination of journalists in the region. The indicated not only concerns the censoring of information in writing, but the violence some authoritarian governments have been pushing toward activists and journalists. Just in the past year, the rate of murder towards journalists has increased. In Guatemala, journalist Orlando Villanueva who covered politics was shot after making various statements about social issues in the area. Not all of these situations are counted by authorities as crimes against freedom of speech.

Additionally, gender violence is a recurrent problem in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). For instance, during the 1990s in Mexico, women's bodies were found on the border of Juarez with signs of torture. The previously mentioned, among countless reports on domestic violence and rape accusations, serves as a wake-up call to the community to take action over the matter. As a result, in 2014, the UN women created the Latin American Model Protocol. This protocol allows the judicial system and forensic medicals to properly proceed with femicide investigations. In addition, (LAC) countries

have adopted legislation in the creation of tools in the context of each country to investigate and punish all forms of violence towards women.

In 1990, the General Assembly created the Santiago Commitment (LAC). This document sets the guidelines or measures, to address any violations of the constitutional order collectively.

Under Resolution 1080, If necessary for the examination and assessment of any unlawful constitutional obstruction, a special congregation of the General Assembly or an extemporaneous session solely on the topic which will be discussed between the related foreign ministers, authority towards the OAS Secretary General will be given, so the determined situation can be investigated and diplomatic actions in cases where the "legitimate exercise of power by the democratically elected government of a member state" has been interfered with can be taken.

Some other institutions exist in Latin America and the Caribbean:

- Freedom House is an institution supporting activists, journalists, civil rights defenders, and societal organizations by registering and publishing evidence on governments' human rights abuses within the region. It has created coalitions to help combat impunity in Guatemala, helped support and assist independent social media in Venezuela, and actively exchanged information with the media-suppressed activists in Cuba, allowing them to broadcast their country's plights securely.
- The Friedrich Naumann Foundation - For Freedom, is an international institution aiding Latin American countries with nurturing liberal communication and working towards lawful governance and a free market economy.

"These events show the value of international alliances in support of democracy and human rights, and the importance of the inter-American system in this movement." -UN Charter

Some treaties mentioned in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action are only some of the treaties that have been passed to ensure international human welfare.

## **Conclusion**

Latin America and the Caribbean are examples of growth, perseverance, and hard work. Therefore, with the authority of the General Assembly and the cooperation of the countries in the committee, the already established matter can be decreased. Strengthening human rights in Latin America and the Caribbean is not only a possibility but a necessity that needs to be fulfilled.

To conquer and surpass this international emergency, upholding the standards of democracy and human rights is pivotal. Contrarily, not only could authoritarian predilections and anti-democratic proclivities be encouraged during this world crisis, they may become a reality.

The principal values that the committee should consider when creating the solution are sustaining human dignity, looking for new solutions, and pursuing justice. We invite the committee to explore the topic further and encourage our delegates to expand on their positions with information acquired outside the background paper.

### **Viable Solutions**

- National human rights institutions (NHRI), have engaged with the international human rights system to increase understanding and awareness of its role in addressing business and human rights issues. As a result, they have contributed to the development of the United Nations Framework on Protection, Respect, and Remedy. They have been given an evolving role in all the pillars of the Framework and its implementation. National institutions fit into the United Nations' legal system on corporate responsibility for human rights as a bridge between the national and international levels, showing how they can help implement the United Nations Guiding Principles.
- Adopting The Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Its purpose is to develop social and equitable entities per the mandates of ministries by implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to address essential obstacles in the way of social growth and democracy.

### **Keywords**

- LAC: Latin America and the Caribbean
- OAS: The Secretary General of the Organization of American States
- IACHR: Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

## Useful sources

[Home \(cepal.org\)](https://cepal.org)

[Explora Secondary Schools \(ebsco.com\)](https://ebsco.com)

[ABC-CLIO Databases - Multi-Product Home Page](#)

[Building back better requires transforming the development model of Latin America and the Caribbean | United Nations](#)

[Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development \(cepal.org\)](#)

[Site search | United Nations](#)

[\(PDF\) The Role of National Human Rights Institutions in the Implementation of the UN Guiding Principles \(researchgate.net\)](#)

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