



**Committee: General Assembly**  
**Topic: Strengthening National Human Rights Institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean**  
**Chair: Galia Fuentes Monjarás**  
**Moderator: Diego Tellez Garza**

## **Introduction**

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) functions as the main representative body of the UN, being made up of 193 members who are granted an equal vote in the assembly. It has been on duty since its establishment in 1945 by the Charter of the United Nations. The GA opens its yearly sessions in September, intending to discuss a broad spectrum of international issues. Conflicts, positions, recommendations for action, and related aspects are debated within the committee with the purpose of getting to an agreement involving a resolution that ensures improvement, or the consideration of a new one in case of having applied an ineffective plan in the past, regarding the same issue.

As declared by the Charter of the United Nations, in Chapter IV, the General Assembly has the power to:

- Consider and authorize the distribution of the budget, and settle the financial assessment of members.
- Make recommendations to the Security Council, Members of the UN, or a specific state concerning a situation.
- Debate questions regarding international peace and security, always maintaining it as a priority.
- Initiate investigations and studies, or make recommendations dealing with social, cultural, political, economic, health, and educational fields. As well as assistance in the recognition of fundamental freedoms and human rights.
- Elect non-permanent members of United Nations organs, including the Security Council.

Additionally, the General Assembly shall take in and revise reports from other organs/committees of the UN, including the Security Council. It is in charge of the consideration of these reports, which will focus on the maintenance of international peace and security.

Regarding the problem, human rights have been in constant violation in different forms within countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. This involves compromising the safety and proper treatment of vulnerable groups, such as immigrants, women, and indigenous people, among others, and the population, in general, being affected. The reinforcement and recognition of human rights for every person has a direct relation with national human rights institutions, and their efforts needed to comply with what the Universal Declaration of Human Rights commits to, since its establishment in 1948. Even though national human rights institutions (NHRIs) have shown efforts for the protection and promotion of human rights, there has not been a significant improvement or achievement. NHRIs have the duty to monitor and report the condition of human rights and related situations, as well as investigate, support, and provide advice about them. There has been concern on behalf of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GAHNRI), and the Network of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the American Continent (RINDHCA), among others.

## **Development**

Human Rights were created on the 10 of December 1948, with the purpose of protecting all human beings no matter their gender, sex, color, race, language, ethnicity, religion, or status. Everyone with a living soul is entitled to these basic but fundamental rights. However, not all good things last forever. Over time some countries and even society itself have forgotten about them, or simply stopped caring, making a world where people can be deprived of their freedom. With the normalization of this treatment, this situation has been rising, and as a consequence, negatively affecting Latin American and Caribbean countries. That's why the committee should address this issue as soon as possible, to stop it from reaching a point where chaos and instability take over more regions from these developing countries.

Since 2009, the UN established a committee whose sole purpose was to support, strengthen, and advise regional human rights institutions, as well as provide assistance in policies and legislation. This organ is called “ROSA” (Regional Office for South America). Nowadays, it works in seven countries in which they have made several efforts for the past 13 years, such as strengthening rights for indigenous people, fighting for immigrants’ rights, and against deprivation from freedom, as is freedom of assembly and expression. But still, during the time we live in, radical changes have been made, and many other issues have risen within Latin American countries, including gender inequality, excessive violence in the streets, and one of the most important topics, femicides, along with several other problems. Data shows that among the 25 countries rated with the highest number of femicides, 14 of them are located in Latin America and the Caribbean, opposing the idea that these countries are developing for good. Unfortunately, these are just some of the issues that people deal with on a daily basis.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries from Latin America have taken ways into Authoritarianism, leaving aside rights that people are supposed to have and leading to the lack of liberties. An example is El Salvador detaining around 1200 people in “containment centers” as the reason for violating curfew mandates, which has created a debate among experts regarding the legality of such actions. Another situation is in Honduras where a decree was stated by the president, restricting people from freedom of speech, with the excuse of the circulation of misinformation associated with the pandemic. In Venezuela, the Maduro government harasses and detains journalists who question official statistics. These and plenty of other problems, focusing on the violation of human rights, occurring in Latin America and the Caribbean are making it complicated and rough for NHRIs to promote and protect the rights of people in certain countries. The previously mentioned make this a major concern that should be addressed and taken into consideration in order to aid the people that reside in countries that are seeking or becoming Authoritarian.

Over the years, corruption in Latin American countries has only become stronger, fewer rights are being satisfied with the development of issues, and people are forced to

emigrate from their countries and homes. Taking action against the government has become a major struggle for human rights institutions since they decline the proposals that are provided for a better environment within society. According to investigations by the Global Corruption Barometer (GCB), carried out in 18 Latin American countries, 1 out of 5 women suffer from sexual extortion or “sextortion” when accessing a government service. Furthermore, 1 in 4 people have been offered bribes in exchange for votes; 65% of the society thinks that the government is run by private interests. Bribery was found more common in Mexico at 51% and the Dominican Republic at 46%. All these interferences and difficulties just to access public services result in a lack of trust in the government on behalf of the citizens, therefore making it harder for people to rely on any type of help offered by them.

Human rights issues in Latin America and the Caribbean have significantly increased with the current state of many countries and their inside conflicts. Considering the role that NHRIs have on this topic, and the present actions being made, there does not seem to be an improvement.

## **Conclusion**

We believe that as an organization, we have the responsibility of bringing these issues to light, for countries to propose solutions that will ensure a positive outcome. Helping change these conditions in favor of the human rights of every citizen in the world, as it is supposed to be. We need to issue recommendations for these conducts that go against basic human rights, and if necessary impose sanctions that can get these countries to comply with these recommendations. Furthermore, the committee can make conventions that should be signed by these countries in exchange for financial aid or access to international programs that provide funding to fight crime, poverty, femicide, immigration, and various problems.

These are global issues that should be taken seriously, considering that a country without basic human rights is a country living in the past, and should be brought to the twenty-first century.

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