



Organization of
American States (OAS)
Chair Letter

DEAR DELEGATES,

Welcome to the Organization of American States at CNYMUN 2025! Perhaps more than ever, diplomacy and collaboration are incredibly important skills, and we look forward to a productive and constructive conference with discussion of some of the most pertinent issues facing the world today. Your chairs for OAS will be Daniel Manta and Nolan Krukin.

ABOUT THE CHAIRS:

Daniel Manta is a junior at Fayetteville-Manlius High School. Last year, he was a rapporteur for the ECOSOC Plenary committee, and has been part of FM's MUN club since 9th grade. Outside of MUN, Daniel enjoys playing tennis, competitive programming, playing the cello and learning new things. Outside of school, Daniel also enjoys swimming, biking, and skiing, and visits his family in Romania every summer. He loves playing Geoguessr and is ranked within the top 100 players worldwide, as well as having a 1700 x Leetcode contest rating and occasionally editing videos. He commonly can be seen saying the words "I think in 5 dimensions" or making up fake stories to his friends for the fun of it. Daniel is excited to help create an amazing CNYMUN 2024!

Nolan Krukin is a senior at Fayetteville-Manlius High School. He chaired the UNPFII at CNYMUN last year, and has been a part of MUN since his freshman year. Outside of MUN, Nolan rows for his school's crew team - placing 10th at Nationals this past spring in the Junior 4+ category - and is a contributing artist to his town, being president of his school's National Art Honors Society. Outside of school, he enjoys making films with friends and family - the most recent one being almost an hour long and featuring 40+ people. He is currently working on building a portable Nintendo Wii, which has been taking a little bit of time. Additionally, Nolan enjoys biking, the word "vehemence", and saying hello to as many people as possible. However, he has a concerning distaste for chocolate and digital clocks. At the time of writing this, he has hair. He is extremely excited to meet so many brilliant delegates and hopes to make CNYMUN 2025 a memorable experience!

ABOUT THE COMMITTEE:

The Organization of American States (OAS), also commonly known as the Organización de los Estados Americanos (OEA) in Spanish, dates back to the First International Conference of American States in October of 1889, setting the stage for what was to be known as the inter-American system.¹ The OAS was officially created in 1948 with the signing in Bogotá, Colombia, of the Charter of the OAS, and it consisted of 21 countries at the time² The OAS met in varying intervals, until in 1970, when the OAS General Assembly replaced it after the enforcement of the Protocol of Amendment to the Charter of the Organization of American States, adopted in Buenos Aires.³ Today, the OAS consists of 35 member states from the Americas (34 participants) and 71 countries with "permanent observer" status.⁴

Cuba was suspended from the OAS in 1962 due to its declaration of being Marxist-Leninist in 1961.⁵ These Cold War tensions between Cuba and the OAS continued until in 2009 when the OAS allowed re-entry to the organization after a vote -- yet, Cuba has not yet accepted the invitation and has no plans to.

The OAS was established with the goals of establishing in its member states "an order of peace and justice, to promote their solidarity, to strengthen their collaboration, and to defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity, and their independence".⁶ The OAS focuses on protecting American countries from outside influence while ensuring and promoting

¹ "OAS : Who We Are." Organization of American States, www.oas.org/en/about/who_we_are.asp.

² Ibid.

³ "OAS : Our History." Organization of American States, www.oas.org/en/about/our_history.asp.

⁴ "About the OAS." U.S. Mission to the Organization of American States, usoas.usmission.gov/our-relationship/about-oas/.

⁵ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Organization of American States." Encyclopedia Britannica, 27 Aug. 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/money/Organization-of-American-States>.

⁶ "Charter of the Organization of American States ; Chapter 1: Nature and Purposes." Organization of American States, 14 Dec. 1992, www.oas.org/en/sla/dil/inter_american_treaties_A-41_charter_OAS.asp#Chapter_I.

democracy throughout the western hemisphere (focused on since the 1990s).⁷

Your Topics for the Organization of American States at CNYMUN 2025 will be:

1. Addressing Inhumane Labor Practices by Business Conglomerates in Latin America
2. Combatting the Influence of Drug Cartels on National and Regional Governments

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE:

Following CNYMUN tradition, the debate will be conducted in Harvard style, meaning delegates will not be allowed to use pre-written clauses and/or resolutions during committee. Doing so will make a delegate ineligible for awards.

To be eligible for awards, delegates must submit a 1-2 page position paper via email that addresses both topics before the start of the conference. Position papers should outline the stance of your delegation, and display an understanding of the topics, demonstrating research and knowledge of your organization's goals. When deciding on awards, the chairs will look favorably upon delegates who have put significant effort towards research/preparation, collaborate with other delegates during committee sessions, stay within their nation's policies, and get their voice heard without being overbearing.

Furthermore, for the first time, CNYMUN is implementing a tiered structure of committees to ensure similar experience levels for all committee members. The Organization of American States is designated as an intermediate committee, and we would like the debate to reflect that. In turn, the 'Best New Delegate' award will not be offered to any delegates in this committee.

Additionally, the Organization of American States will be the only committee at CNYMUN 2025 run as a double-delegate committee. This means that schools sending a delegation to the OAS committee may send two delegates per country, rather than one. These two delegates must work together in all aspects of debate – speeches, resolution-writing, discussion,

⁷ (Britannica 2024)

etc. Note that awards will be given by delegation, rather than by individual delegates.

Please share position papers before the conference begins. To contact your chairs about any research, position papers, committee inquiries, or other questions, our emails are listed below. We also encourage you to scan our lengthy delegate preparation resources – and award structure – on www.cnymun.org. We wish you luck, and look forward to what CNYMUN 2025 will bring!

Nolan Krukin
25nkrukin@fmschools.org

Daniel Manta
26dmanta@fmschools.org

TOPIC 1: ADDRESSING INHUMANE LABOR PRACTICES BY BUSINESS CONGLOMERATES IN LATIN AMERICA

A common trend is for corporations based in more developed countries to exploit less developed countries for cheap and often inhumane labor. Much of this revolves around the lack of regulations in these countries or the lack of enforcement of the regulations. Either way, the UN has the ability and the responsibility to either: suggest positive regulations that will protect the citizens of less developed countries without infringing on possible commercial groups, or provide manpower or suggest changes to judicial systems to avoid exploitation of justice systems and create proper law enforcement systems to monitor possible violations of regulations.

Inhumane labor practices greatly vary depending on location and industry. In the Apparel and Textile Industry (the most common industry to experience human rights violations in Latin America), sweatshops are exceptionally common, especially in Mexico and Central America, as well as informal labor (lack of healthcare or job security, etc). Other industries, such as the illegal mining industry, exploit indigenous and impoverished communities. Furthermore, industries such as fishing exploit a lack of legal protection and industries such as agriculture utilize child labor on a large-scale level⁸. Agreements like NAFTA, while helpful in decreasing inhumane labor practices, can sometimes inhibit improvement in those areas due to relentless increase in industry.

The apparel and textile industry is the industry most affected by inhumane labor practices in Latin America. As previously mentioned, this industry is plagued with sweatshops, in which workers are forced to work 12-14 hour days in unsafe conditions, while being paid much below minimum wage. Moreover, studies have shown that in sweatshops across Latin America, women are commonly harassed and denied maternity leave. In the region, 19 out of 32 countries have no laws regarding maternity

⁸ "Fighting Forced Labor in Latin America." International Labour Organization, 24 Feb. 2024, www.ilo.org/resource/article/fighting-forced-labour-latin-america#:~:text=The%20most%20acute%20forms%20of,enganche%20system%20of%20labour%20contracting.

leave, meaning often pregnant women are fired or forced to work⁹. These infractions are hidden and the workers are barred from discussing or taking action on these infractions through "union busting". In many cases, these sweatshops are rarely directly connected to multinational corporations accused of using illegal labor, such as Nike and Apple, but are connected through the use of contractual labor, where large companies contract another for production. Thus, the company loses the ability to audit the labor that goes into creating their product.¹⁰

The gold mining industry, although not often directly tied to large companies, often goes to benefit rich offshore corporations (often large Chinese mega-banks, see second to last paragraph) while exploiting the indigenous and impoverished. Oftentimes, migrants or indigenous are forced or trafficked to work in mining camps and aren't allowed to leave. Most often, this happens to women and children. A specific area notable for these illegal mining projects is the Amazon basin, which is rich with gold and silver. Mining in these areas can also cause deforestation and habitat loss to the vital species and biodiversity that reside in the Amazon. Thus, it is up to law enforcement and policy makers to protect this vital land and the indigenous people who live on it.¹¹

Another industry where inhumane labor is rampant is the agriculture industry. One of the most notable historical examples of this is the United Fruit Company. This multinational corporation formed in 1899 traded bananas, supplying them to a consumer base of wealthier Americans. However, in an age before globalization, the United Fruit Company was guilty of many human rights violations on their plantations in Costa Rica, Honduras, and Guatemala. Moreover, their connection to the US government

⁹ World Bank Group. "Latin America's Great Debt to Female Workers." World Bank, 24 Mar. 2022, www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2022/03/23/trabajadoras-latinoamericanas.

¹⁰ "Women Factory Workers in Honduras." War on Want, www.waronwant.org/news-analysis/women-factory-worker-s-honduras.

¹¹ "The Devastating Impact of Illegal Gold Mining in Latin America." INTERPOL, www.interpol.int/en/News-and-Events/News/2022/The-devastating-impact-of-illegal-gold-mining-in-Latin-America.

even led to their control of the entire nation of Nicaragua, stopping a regime that would allow for unions on the plantation through military force. Although the United Fruit Company no longer exists today, it set the stage for many huge, multinational corporations exploiting the workers of developing countries. Among the most common abuses in the agriculture sector are forced labor/child labor, low wages, and poor working conditions. One of the most infamous companies known for their human rights abuses is Nestle, the company responsible for making Mars bars, Kit Kats, and Nespresso Pods. Although much of their production and plantations are found in Ghana and the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, their coffee is largely supplied from Brazil. On these coffee plantations, children are often forced to work, without access to education. This inhibits the growth of communities and the existence of plantations also disrupts natural biodiversity. Another company carrying on the legacy of the United Fruit Company is the Chiquita Company, the largest banana provider in the United States. Chiquita Farms is less known for small-scale worker exploitation and rather for corporate abuses, such as working with Colombian terrorist groups to silence unions and intimidate farmers. These are known as corporate abuses and are necessary to protect large scale worker exploitation and maintain the level of illegal labor currently found in Latin America.¹²

The last major industry suffering from inhumane labor practices is the fishing industry. This industry is interesting because, based on the location of fishing ships, they aren't under the sovereignty of whichever waters they are closest to but rather whichever flag they fly on. Thus, it is common for large fishing ships to fly under the Panama flag, as the labor regulations in Panama are not fully developed, nor enforced. Thus, workers can be exploited and coerced without repercussions for the multinational companies operating the tanker. For example, locals in Latin American countries can be trafficked onto the ship, and due to the lack of exit opportunities in the middle of the ocean, they can be denied wages, exploited and kept at sea for months at a time.

¹² NBCUniversal News Group. "Chiquita Admits to Paying Colombia Terrorists." NBCNews.com, 14 Mar. 2007, www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna17615143.

Overall, many industries in Latin America suffer from inhumane labor practices. Yet, aside from the agricultural sector, many of these large corporations have gone unnamed. Largely, these are because they aren't outwardly selling anything and are mostly unheard of by the public. An example of this is Chinese banks (China International Trust and Investment Corporation in Mining, China Petrochemical Corporation in Hydrocarbons). In a report from the International Federation of Human Rights, 6 Chinese banks and 23 Chinese consortiums were involved with human and nature's rights violations, most being in the mining industry. Many of these companies are also affiliated with the Chinese government, which is concerning given that 21 countries in Latin America are in China's Belt and Road Initiative.¹³

Corporate Abuse is the means by which large-scale labor exploitation occurs in Latin America. Human rights watchers are often the only obstacle between abusive corporations and exploitation, especially in Latin American countries without proper frameworks and regulations to prevent abuses. However, these human rights watchers are often targeted by strategic lawsuits from these companies, which aim to limit their overseeing of company labor. In the past decade, there have been nearly 2000 attacks on Human Rights Defenders in Latin America, constituting nearly half of all such attacks across the globe.¹⁴ An agreement that aims to protect these Human Rights Defenders is the Escazu Agreement, which is currently recognized across the entirety of Latin America but is not always put into action.¹⁵

¹³ New report examines rights violations by Chinese business activities in Latin America. International Federation for Human Rights. (n.d.-a). <https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/business-human-rights-environment/business-and-human-rights/violations-chinese-business-latin-america-report>

¹⁴ Jaramillo, A. N. Z. "Latin America and the Caribbean: New Standards on the Horizon to Protect Human Rights Defenders Fighting Harmful Business Practices." Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, www.business-humanrights.org/en/blog/latin-america-and-the-caribbean-new-standards-on-the-horizon-to-protect-human-rights-defenders-fighting-harmful-business-practices/.

¹⁵ Business & Human Rights Resource Centre. Guardians at Risk: Confronting Corporate Abuse in Latin America and the Caribbean. N.d., <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/from-us/briefings/guardians-at-risk-confronting-corporate-abuse-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean>.

Corporate Abuse highlights the main issue that human rights abuses in Latin America comes down to: corruption. Countries corrupted by the greed-induced desires of multinational corporations are going to have a very difficult time getting rid of the ingrown corruption allowing it due to the power given to conglomerates. Moreover, Western countries with more influence and resources are slower and less effective in providing aid because they benefit from the conglomerates found guilty of human rights abuses in Latin America, such as Coca-Cola and Chiquita Farms.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. How is it possible to enforce regulations in remote areas such as the Amazon Jungle?
2. Is it possible for external, third party groups to shut down sweatshops without infringing on national sovereignty?
3. Should companies be responsible for overseeing work they contracted to other groups?
4. How do you balance a country's commercial success with regulation and labor/union protection?

HELPFUL SOURCES:

“Latin America and the Caribbean: New Standards on the Horizon to Protect Human Rights Defenders Fighting Harmful Business Practices”

<https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/blog/latin-america-and-the-caribbean-new-standards-on-the-horizon-to-protect-human-rights-defenders-fighting-harmful-business-practices/>

“Guardians at Risk: Confronting Corporate Abuse in Latin America and the Caribbean”

<https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/from-us/briefings/guardians-at-risk-confronting-corporate-abuse-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean/>

“New Report Examines Rights Violations by Chinese Business Activities in Latin America”

<https://www.fidh.org/en/issues/business-human-rights-environment/business-and-human-rights/violations-chinese-business-latin-america-report>

TOPIC 2: COMBATTING THE INFLUENCE OF DRUG CARTELS ON NATIONAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS

Drug cartels - criminal organizations that control all means of production and distribution of narcotic drugs in ways to reduce or prevent competition - have played central roles in shaping the Americas economically, socially, and politically.¹⁶ However, cartels were not a part of the Americas from the start; they were a feature that grew out of the specific conditions provided by the political conditions of both North and South America. Since Columbus introduced the Americas to Europe in 1492, the Americas became a breeding ground for colonialism and trade.¹⁷ Large parts of the Americas were split between these European countries; Portugal and Spain occupied the east and west of South America, respectively, and France and England occupied much of North America.¹⁸ However, the land which the Europeans took were occupied by Indigenous populations which were treated often subhuman with systems such as the Casta system in Spanish America and slavery throughout the Americas.¹⁹ After the United States gained independence from Britain in the 1770s, many other countries were vehement to revolt as well; Haiti, France, and countries in Latin America took initiative.²⁰ From 1808 and 1836, all of Latin America, except for Puerto Rico and Cuba, had gained their independence.²¹ However, due to the harsh conditions left behind by the revolutions and the debts to their previous colonial countries, many governments that materialized were fragile and frail.

The origins of Latin American countries have allowed for political instability and poverty to grow; while these features are unique to Latin America, other factors such as its boastful fertile soil and the

¹⁶ Rodriguez, Stephen. "Cartel." La Criminal Defense Attorney, www.lacriminaldefenseattorney.com/legal-dictionary/c/cartel/.

¹⁷ Stearns, Peter N., et al. World Civilizations: The Global Experience. 8th ed., Pearson Education, 2021.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ (Stearns 2021)

²⁰ "Sister Revolutions: American Revolutions on Two Continents." National Park Service, www.nps.gov/articles/000/sister-revolutions-american-revolutions-on-two-continents-teaching-with-historic-places.htm.

²¹ Ibid.

indigenous knowledge of cultivating coca leaf (the plant responsible for cocaine) have led Latin America to become the perfect location for drug cartels to flourish.²² Cocaine was one of the first drugs to kickstart the cartels after it began to be recreationally used in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.²³ Initially when European and U.S pharmacists discovered Indigenous communities in Latin America, which used the leaves for its medical properties, the plants were subsequently studied before focus on the plant stopped primarily being medicine in the 1940s to become a recreational drug.²⁴ As the 20th century advanced, regional farmers in Latin America began growing coca in larger quantities and selling it to illegal groups, who later refined it into the cocaine which would be illegally distributed throughout the Americas and beyond.²⁵ The soil conditions and poverty of Latin America created the grounds for this method to become a way for individuals to gain power and money and for cartels to develop and flourish.

Drugs such as cocaine from Latin America often reached an end point in the United States throughout the 20th century, with Richard Nixon stating in 1968 that the illegal drug flow into the U.S was “public enemy number one.”²⁶ However, Nixon’s fight against drugs mainly targeted marijuana and heroin; increasing demand for cocaine in the U.S led to the creation of the first drug cartels in Latin America in the 1970s.²⁷ The first major drug cartel in Columbia - led by Pablo Escobar - was the Medellín cartel; this cartel grew out of the foundations of initial smuggling of cocaine into a business which expanded to eventually utilize private planes to transport shipments, construct grander drug laboratories, and even purchase an island in the Caribbean to refuel

²² De los Rios Hernández, Isabela. "Knowledge, Soil, Politics, and Poverty: How Drug Trafficking Has Kept Its Hold on Latin America." *Harvard International Review*, 26 June 2024, hir.harvard.edu/knowledge-soil-politics-and-poverty-how-drug-trafficking-has-kept-its-hold-on-latin-america/.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ (De los Rios Hernandez 2024)

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ "President Nixon Declares Drug Abuse 'Public Enemy Number One.'" *Youtube*, 17 June 1968, www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8TGLLQID9M.

²⁷ Samuels, Richard J.. "drug cartel". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 22 May. 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/drug-cartel>.

aircrafts.²⁸ The drug trade in Medellín expanded to control all means of production and distribution in order to prevent competition, solidifying itself as one of the first major drug cartels - beneficial as it was able to combat the Colombian government due to its size and power. Since then, drugs have been associated with cartels due to the monetary gain and simplicity that controlling the full drug market grants; this in turn causes ebbs and flows in the market as cartels in specific regions fall and become replaced by new ones, and thus pursuing an everlasting cycle of cartels, each affecting the quality of life in countries differently.

Today, the largest cartel in Latin America is the Sinaloa cartel; named after where it originated in Mexico, the cartel had estimates of controlling roughly 40% to 60% of Mexico’s drug trade while earning as much as \$3 billion annually in the early 2010s.²⁹ Before the Sinaloa cartel came to become the dominant power, the Tijuana cartel was responsible for most illicit drug trade in Mexico starting in the 1980s.³⁰ As the Sinaloa cartel rose in power, cartel wars occurred between the two groups which sparked violence throughout Mexico before the Sinaloa cartel rose to the top, affecting the quality of life throughout Mexico for citizens and the autonomy of the national government.³¹ However, violence was not the only aspect of rising to power for the Sinaloa cartel, they also found ways to gain legitimacy with the people of Mexico; when the Tijuana cartel was in power there would be high amounts of extortion with people under Tijuana territory, while the Sinaloa cartel appeared to be appealing to citizens as it would request less funds and would treat people under its territory better in comparison.³² Additionally, the Sinaloa cartel has helped local businesses by keeping government tax collectors and inspectors away; there are even examples of the cartel helping in moral matters such

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Chavez, Nicole. "What We Know about the Sinaloa Cartel and Its Leaders." *CNN*, 28 July 2024, www.cnn.com/2024/07/27/us/sinaloa-cartel-history-leaders/index.html.

³⁰ (Samuels 2024)

³¹ Felbab-Brown, Vanda. "How the Sinaloa Cartel Rules." *Brookings*, 4 Apr. 2022, www.brookings.edu/articles/how-the-sinaloa-cartel-rules/.

³² Ibid.

as solving kidnappings and handing over the alleged kidnappers to authorities rather than resorting to extreme matters.³³

The Sinaloa cartel - while operating often with violence like other cartels - has gained legitimacy throughout Mexico with people due to its comparatively more-lenient way of controlling. While the tolerance of the Sinaloa cartel may appear to be good from the outside, it instead allows the cartel to gain more power and directly threaten the Mexican government by patching vulnerabilities within the cartel and by blocking governmental control over regions. With this, the cartel has been able to take over many economies throughout Mexico - not just the illegal ones - by instating full control over the areas in which they occupy economically and politically, such as operating fisheries in full - from catch to sale.³⁴ By doing this, the Sinaloa cartel has effectively limited the control that the Mexican government has over the land which the cartel occupies; it has reduced the autonomy that the government has on that region and has in turn directly influenced the government by checking its power.

Mexico has attempted to combat the cartel, however; they arrested El Chapo - the leader of the cartel - in 2016 and extradited him to the U.S.³⁵ While this may appear to have been a success for Mexico on a path to regain autonomy, the resulting wars over power and land caused unprecedented violence and bloodshed throughout Mexico.³⁶ The Mexican government's actions against the cartel in 2016 showed how the issue of cartels is not addressable simply by killing their leaders and are actually further provoked by doing so; the Sinaloa cartel has solidified itself as apart of the economy and society of Mexico and more extensive measures are needed in order to successfully combat the cartels influence on the government.

Cartels are not an issue exclusive to one country, however; many cartels do not respect countries'

³³ (Felbab-Brown 2022)

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ (Chavez 2024)

³⁶ Ibid.

borders and spread throughout Latin America, causing issues for multiple countries. An example of this is the Tren de Aragua cartel - a cartel formed in Venezuela around fifteen years ago in the Tocorón Penitentiary Center in the state of Aragua.³⁷ Since then, the group has expanded across Latin America to other countries including Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Brazil, Ecuador and Chile.³⁸ This expansion to other countries has changed the cartel from a domestic issue for Venezuela to a large-scale issue between multiple Latin American countries, something that likely could have been prevented if the criminal group was suppressed while starting off in Venezuela. Recently, Chile has accused Tren de Aragua of kidnapping and murdering a former Venezuelan soldier; the cartel expanded to Chile in 2021 and has been since involved in numerous accounts of murders, human trafficking, rape, and torture.³⁹ Chile has attempted to stop the progression of the violence throughout the country. To do this, the coercion of the drug trade and the business-style of the cartel were studied in order to determine the cartel as a threat and in order to identify weak points; with these methods, the government was able to identify ways of travel and arrest a number of members and stop multiple drug trades throughout the country.⁴⁰ Additionally, Chile's Congress has passed legislation targeted to combat organized crime and cartels within the country and has formed a team under the Justice Ministry to combat cartels further.⁴¹ Chile was forced to take these measures due to the spread of cartel groups into its country but has had some success in suppressing the groups internally. However, the Tren de Aragua still remains a large-scale group within South America and threatens other countries, emphasizing the importance of countries in Latin America to work together in order to suppress the effects of cartels on their governments individually and the autonomy of Latin America as a whole.

³⁷ "Tren de Aragua." InSight Crime, 12 July 2024, insightcrime.org/venezuela-organized-crime-news/tren-de-aragua/.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Laborde, Antonia. "Venezuela's Tren De Aragua Gang Terrorizes Chile." El Pais, 6 Mar. 2024, english.elpais.com/international/2024-03-06/venezuelas-tren-de-aragua-gang-terrorizes-chile.html.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ (Laborde 2024)

Another example of a country which has pushed back against cartels to varying degrees of success is in El Salvador, where President Nayib Bukele has led a vast and brutal crackdown on gangs and cartels in the country - now boasting the title of “the safest country in Latin America”.⁴² However, this has come at the cost of jailing over 75,000 people, with an estimated third of the people being innocent and not related to gangs or cartels.⁴³ The violence related to cartel and gang violence has decreased dramatically as a result of these measures, but at the cost of jailing many innocent citizens, often due to strict detainment quotas for and by El Salvador police as ordered by the President; this policy has also decreased democracy throughout the country: free speech is limited while Bukele has been creating these policies without any checks due to his party majority and massive public support -- Bukele was even able to successfully remove term limits from the constitution, being able to run again now for future elections.⁴⁵ While El Salvador has directly fought back against cartels and gangs and has successfully decreased the rate of crime, this ultimately came with the cost of becoming a more authoritarian state rather than a democratic one.

Moreover, other countries such as the United States have been affected indirectly by cartel groups. While Chile has been affected directly by the violence of the cartel groups, the U.S has been greatly affected by the actual drug trade which has greatly affected domestic law and policy within the country - despite there being no cartel groups having direct control over land in the country.⁴⁶ This, however, doesn't prevent there being cartel presence within the U.S. The drug trade has spread throughout U.S cities and has changed how law enforcement and laws work

⁴² Nawaz, Amna. "Thousands of Innocent People Jailed in El Salvador's Gang Crackdown." PBS, 14 Feb. 2024, www.pbs.org/newshour/show/thousands-of-innocent-people-jailed-in-el-salvadors-gang-crackdown.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ "The Worst Prison in America." Youtube, uploaded by fern, 31 May 2024, www.youtube.com/watch?v=BV7Q0zYDO9I.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ "The Impact of Mexican Cartels on U.S. Law Enforcement: Understanding the Threat." Police1, 11 Sept. 2023, www.police1.com/drug-interdiction-narcotics/articles/the-impact-of-mexican-cartels-on-us-law-enforcement-understanding-the-threat-XBBgXMLhRYiWuFzA/.

within the country, as well as affecting U.S foreign policy and border control.⁴⁷ Furthermore, political relationships between the U.S and other countries - namely Mexico - have been impacted negatively by disagreements over how to combat the drug trade occurring over the countries' borders. While some countries are directly affected by drug production and trade within its borders and others are affected by trade through its borders, each country in Latin America has been influenced by drug cartels while deciding domestic laws.

However, cartels have not kept their impact to just Latin America -- some groups have expanded their markets out to Asia and Europe, too. Recently, U.S markets have been considered “oversaturated” by cartel groups and as such some groups have recently expanded out to Europe and now Asia.⁴⁸ Drug production has increased dramatically over the past decade - there are around 2000 metric tons of cocaine being produced per year; this faster growth rate of drug production has been a major cause for the needs of these cartels to expand to markets outside of the Americas.⁴⁹ This issue related to global markets shows that cartels cannot be addressed individually; for example, if the U.S were to attempt to decrease drug trade into its borders by imposing greater border control or other such restrictions, then the cartels would end up selling greater amounts of drugs overseas; this would in turn allow cartels to seize even more power over Latin America.⁵⁰ Additionally, higher production and market expansion of the drug trade has led to greater amounts of violence throughout Latin America; Ecuador has become a violent battleground for many cartels, correlating with an increase of overseas trade with Asia.⁵¹ As drug cartels are starting to expand their reaches overseas, it is increasingly important for countries in the Americas to work together to suppress and

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Douglas, Jeremy. "Policing One of the World's 'Biggest Drug Trafficking Corridors.'" UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, 29 June 2023, www.unodc.org/roseap/en/2023/06/biggest-drug-trafficking-corridors/story.html.

⁴⁹ Sampó, Carolina, and Valeska Troncoso. "Why Drug Cartels Are Expanding to Asia." America's Quarterly, 14 Feb. 2024, www.americasquarterly.org/article/why-drug-cartels-are-expanding-to-asia/.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ (Sampó and Troncoso 2024)

combat these groups before they gain more power in Latin America and overseas.

It is integral for countries in the Americas to work together under the Organization of American States in order to prevent the spread of cartel's influences on their countries and to combat the domination of cartels over countries' economies, societies, and policies. Whether or not a cartel group is directly present within a country, every country under the OAS is affected by the drug trade - with the cartels reaching overseas to Asia and Europe as well. Cartel groups and the drug trade are not able to be dealt with alone as cartel groups will re-form and move to places with enforcement that allows them to. They are not to be dealt with individually by one country, especially when some of them such as Tren de Aragua are present in multiple countries and trade with multiple countries too. Cartels often do not respect countries' borders and affect every country in some way as a result; if one country combats cartels alone then the cartels will still have influence on America. Delegates should keep this in mind during debate and should consider to what extent cartels have influence on their respective countries' economies, policies, and societies while developing a protocol.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. How can governments and law enforcement combat cartels which have autonomous control over specific regions of countries?
2. What methods can be used to prevent emerging cartels from gaining power before they spread between countries?
3. How can countries who have been impacted less by cartels aid countries who have been impacted more?
4. What procedures can be completed to diminish the amount of people who partake in the cartels? What procedures are too extreme? What procedures are not extreme enough?
5. How can countries who have tensions with one another work together with regards to cartels?

HELPFUL SOURCES:

“How the Sinaloa Cartel Rules”

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-the-sinaloa-cartel-rules/>

“Knowledge, Soil, Politics, and Poverty: How Drug Trafficking Has Kept Its Hold on Latin America”

<https://hir.harvard.edu/knowledge-soil-politics-and-poverty-how-drug-trafficking-has-kept-its-hold-on-latin-america/>

“Why Drug Cartels Are Expanding to Asia”

<https://www.americasquarterly.org/article/why-drug-cartels-are-expanding-to-asia/>

“Drug Cartels Threaten Latin American Democracy”

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-17228660>

“The War on Drugs in El Salvador: A Success Story?”

<https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/the-war-on-drugs-in-el-salvador-a-success-story/>