

TriMUN 2024-2025 Background Guide

Introduction to Committee

The United Nations General Assembly is one of the main groups within the United Nations, being its main deliberative body. Established in 1945, the General Assembly is headquartered in New York City and comprises every member state, each of which has an equal vote within the General Assembly.

The General Assembly has several key roles within the United Nations, including but not limited to the appointment of the Secretary-General, the election of non-permanent members of the Security Council, and approving the UN budget. They meet regularly between September and December, and whenever necessary throughout the year to discuss specific issues through a dedicated agenda to hopefully adopt resolutions. Issues that are brought before the General Assembly have a wide range, including concerns about sustainable development to global security.

History/Past-Action by the UN

So far the UN has passed several initiatives against human trafficking, establishing the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). UN.GIFT (UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking) and the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, July 30th, are two additional actions taken to prevent human trafficking.

Adopted by General Assembly resolution 55/25 of November 15, 2000, the UNTOC is the host of many international crime-combating agencies. This includes the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, adopted by General Assembly resolution 55/25 on 25 December 2000, the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, adopted by General Assembly resolution 55/25 on 28 January 2004, and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition, adopted by General Assembly resolution 55/255 on 31 May 2001. Key parts of the two human trafficking protocols are as follows:

1. The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children
 - “First global legally binding instrument with an agreed definition on trafficking in persons¹”
 - Establishes a definition and method of fair conviction of human trafficking cases to encourage convergence in methods of fighting human trafficking on a global scale
 - Provide assistance to victims of human trafficking
2. The Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air
 - Defines what it means to smuggle migrants
 - Outlines punishments for smuggling migrants
 - Protects the rights of those smuggled

¹ unodc.org

The Global Action to Prevent and Address Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Migrants (GLO.ACT) was a four-year initiative (2015-2019), backed by an 11 million euro investment from the European Union and the UNODC. This program, in collaboration with organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), spanned 13 countries across Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. Its primary aim was to address and mitigate the issues of human trafficking and migrant smuggling. The GLO.ACT strategy focused on four key aspects: prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership.

Following the original GLO.ACT campaign, multiple regional initiatives were launched. GLO.ACT Niger (2019-2021) was a two-year, 500,000 euro project funded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. This project focused on helping the Nigerien government develop legislative and policy frameworks, strengthen criminal justice responses, and encourage regional cooperation to combat human trafficking. GLO.ACT Bangladesh similarly extended the original program, with the government of Bangladesh and IOM leading its implementation, while GLO.ACT Asia and the Middle East was a four-year initiative targeting Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan, also focused on the same key principles of prevention, protection, and prosecution.

As of late, the UNODC has been working alongside the EU to combat child trafficking, particularly focusing on a victim-centered approach in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and Tajikistan. Even more recently the EU launched the Protect Project, a three-year campaign (2023-2026) aimed at addressing the trafficking of migrants and children, particularly within Central Asia.

In an effort to raise awareness of human trafficking trends and developments, UNODC led the 2023 World Day Against Trafficking in Persons campaign. This event brought together organizations such as the IOM, governments, law enforcement agencies, and civil society to strengthen prevention efforts and encourage action against human trafficking. It also highlighted the importance of informing countries on how to combat human trafficking.

In recent weeks, Brazil has launched a new National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons (August 2024). This blueprint is designed to guide policy and advocacy efforts against smuggling and trafficking in the coming years. Additionally, the 2022 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons revealed that over 50% of human trafficking cases are reported by victims or their families. The report also highlighted that women and girls account for 60% of trafficking victims, often facing sexual exploitation and violence, while men and boys are more likely to be exploited for forced labor and illicit activities.

Statistics from 2020 show the distribution of trafficking exploitation: 38.8% involved forced labor, 38.7% sexual exploitation, 10.3% mixed forms, 10.2% forced criminal activity, and smaller percentages for forced marriage, exploitative begging, illegal adoption, and organ removal. UNICEF reported that more than a quarter of trafficking victims globally are children, with this figure rising to two-thirds in regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa, Central America, and the Caribbean.

New findings from IOM suggest that in the past decade, 80% of internationally trafficked victims passed through official border points. In early July 2018, UN member states adopted the Global Compact on Migration, calling for enhanced cross-border cooperation, timely referrals of potential victims, and protection of vulnerable migrants. Data from the 2018 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons showed a record number of trafficking cases detected in 2016, with the largest conviction rates of traffickers, attributed to improved detection methods and an overall increase in trafficking incidents. Between 2003 and 2016, the number of trafficking cases reported increased by over 5,000, with a rise in the number of institutions collecting trafficking data, expanding from 26 to 65 countries between 2009 and 2018.

Problems

A resolution should establish focus on what aspect of human trafficking your country would want to focus on, prevention, regulations, research, and provide specific actions on what you want to happen with what you choose to focus on as well as addressing punishments.

Questions to think about during your research:

- How significant is the presence of human trafficking in your country?
- Current legislation on human trafficking in your country?
- How many citizens of your country have been affected by human trafficking?
- Does your country need assistance in dealing with human trafficking?
- How severely does your country punish human trafficking?

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