

MUN Without Borders 2026 Chair Report
UNHRC: United Nations Human Rights Council

Committee Overview

Curbing State-Sanctioned Violence Against Human Rights Defenders in Latin America

Safeguarding the Rights of Refugee and Stateless Children in Southeast Asia

COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION:

This committee will follow THIMUN procedure, meaning that resolutions must be drafted prior to the start of the conference. Delegates are expected to come prepared with well-researched draft resolutions, working papers, and an understanding of relevant operative and preambulatory clauses. Submissions must follow THIMUN formatting standards (single-spaced, Times New Roman, etc). Additionally, it is highly suggested that every delegate conduct relevant research on the agenda, their country's stance, and past actions.

All delegates are expected to come to the first day of the conference with a working knowledge of all or most of the topics, as well as the policies of the countries that they represent. As the [Committee], it is imperative that delegates keep in mind that their purpose is to protect and promote universal human rights and fundamental freedoms without infringing upon national sovereignty. Above all, remember that Model UN is not a competition, so get to researching and try to have fun!

ABOUT US:

Hannah Kim

[Assistant Chair]

Hello delegates! My name is Hannah Kim, and I'm currently a junior at Hankuk Academy of Foreign Studies. This will be my third year participating in Model United Nations and my third occasion serving as chair. I'm thrilled to be back on the dais, this time for UNHRC!

[Chair Greetings]
Email:

I'm really looking forward to the debates we'll have on the two agendas and I can't wait to see the creative solutions you all bring to committee.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions before or during conference!

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Agenda 1: Curbing State-Sanctioned Violence Against Human Rights Defenders in Latin America

A human rights defender (HRD) is any individual who works, individually or collectively, to promote or protect human rights, including but not limited to environmental activists, Indigenous leaders, journalists, trade unionists, and community organizers. "State-sanctioned" violence includes not only direct attacks by state security forces, but also the state's tolerance, facilitation, or willful failure to prevent violence carried out by allied non-state actors such as paramilitaries, armed groups, and extractive-industry enforcers. Latin America has held the grim distinction of being the world's deadliest region for this work for over a decade running.

Colombia anchors the crisis. A 2026 UN Human Rights Office report documented 410 human rights defenders killed between January 2022 and December 2025 alone, with Indigenous Peoples comprising 23% of victims despite making up under 5% of the population. Zooming out further, 972 such killings were recorded in Colombia between 2016 and 2025, roughly 100 per year, with over 70% of identified perpetrators being non-state armed actors operating in the vacuum left by the 2016 peace accords. Nonetheless, accountability remains almost nonexistent: of hundreds of cases investigated in that period, only 55 ended in sentencing, and in over half no suspect was even identified.

The pattern repeats across the region. Front Line Defenders' 2025 data recorded at least 357 HRDs killed across 27 countries, led by Colombia (165), Mexico (43), and Brazil (22), with 274 defenders murdered in 2025 overall, concentrated in Colombia, Mexico, and Brazil. Environmental and land defenders face particularly acute risk: 82% of all documented violence against environmental human rights defenders worldwide in 2024 occurred in Latin America, reflecting how extractive industries, land inequality, and weak state presence intersect to endanger those who resist them. State forces themselves have also been directly implicated; a 2025 police operation in Rio de Janeiro killed more than 120 people in a single raid that contravened international policing standards, while several governments have moved to restrict civil society through legal means, such as El Salvador's Foreign Agents Law, which imposes a 30% tax on international funding to human rights organizations and grants the executive power to fine or dissolve them.

The primary international frameworks are the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (non-binding but foundational), the American Convention on Human Rights, and the jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR), which in 2025 extended its protections explicitly to climate and environmental defenders. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights' rapid-response mechanisms remain the region's chief accountability tools, though, as in other thematic areas, enforcement depends entirely on state cooperation.

OHCHR, "Colombia: Urgent action needed to end widespread violence against human rights defenders – UN report," March 2026.
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2026/03/colombia-urgent-action-needed-end-widespread-violence-against-human-rights>

Latin America Reports, "Nearly 100 human rights defenders killed every year in Colombia: UN report," March 2026.
<https://www.latinamericareports.com/nearly-100-human-rights-defenders-killed-every-year-in-colombia-un-report/13963/>

Front Line Defenders, "Global Analysis 2025/26," June 2026.
<https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/statement-report/human-rights-defenders-need-support-sustain-fearless-work-increasingly-hostile>

Robert & Ethel Kennedy Human Rights Center, "Latin America: The Most Dangerous Region to Defend the Planet," January 2026.
<https://kenedyhumanrights.org/our-voices/latin-america-the-most-dangerous-region-to-defend-the-planet/>

Amnesty International, "Human Rights in the Americas — Regional Overview."
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/americas/report-americas/>

Agenda 2: Safeguarding the Rights of Refugee and Stateless Children in Southeast Asia

Statelessness refers to when an individual is not recognized as a national by any state, leaving them without access to the legal protections, documentation, and services that citizenship confers. In Southeast Asia, this crisis is inseparable from the plight of the Rohingya, a Muslim minority denied citizenship in Myanmar since 1982 and now recognized as the world's largest stateless population, numbering 1.8 million. Children bear a disproportionate share of this burden, with over 77.6% of Rohingya refugees and asylum seekers identified as women and children. This led the displacement figures to climb, with more than 3.6 million people internally displaced within Myanmar by the end of 2025.

Regional host countries face mounting strain. Bangladesh alone shelters over 1.2 million Rohingya refugees and asylum-seekers, the majority in the densely packed camps of Cox's Bazar, where chronic underfunding has cut deeply into education, health, and protection services. Desperation has pushed families toward increasingly lethal alternatives: 2025 was recorded as the deadliest year yet for maritime movements of Rohingya refugees, with over 6,500 people attempting sea crossings and roughly one in seven reported missing or dead: the highest mortality rate of any major refugee sea route worldwide, a trend that has continued into 2026. In Malaysia, refugee children face a starkly different but equally precarious reality. Government data from 2025 show that among nearly 18,000 people held in immigration detention, 41.6%

were from Myanmar, including 10.4% who were children, highlighting how statelessness exposes minors to arbitrary detention even where they have committed no offense.

Some incremental protections have emerged including Indonesia's Refugee Registration Document Programme, and legal reforms such as a 2025 Legal Aid and Public Defence Bill have extended legal aid access to refugee children regardless of nationality. Yet these remain patchwork solutions in a region where most states are not parties to the 1951 Refugee Convention, leaving protection frameworks fragmented and heavily dependent on UNHCR's operational presence rather than binding domestic law.

The principal legal instruments governing this issue are the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, and of course, most directly relevant to children, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which guarantees every child's right to a nationality (Article 7) and protection from discrimination regardless of status (Article 2). UNHCR's #IBelong Campaign to End Statelessness and its Global Trends Report continue to anchor advocacy, though 2025 marked a notable inflection point: global forced displacement fell for the first time in a decade, even as resettlement pathways narrowed sharply, with arrivals through resettlement or sponsorship pathways falling by more than half year-on-year to just 81,800 in 2025, a widening gap between need and available protection that leaves stateless children especially exposed.

USA for UNHCR, "Rohingya Refugee Crisis: Supporting the Stateless Minority Fleeing Myanmar." <https://www.unrefugees.org/emergencies/rohingya-refugee-crisis/>

UNHCR, "2025 was deadliest year yet for maritime movements of Rohingya refugees," April 2026. <https://www.unhcr.org/us/news/briefing-notes/unhcr-2025-was-deadliest-year-yet-maritime-movements-rohingya-refugees>

UNHCR, "Operational Data Portal — October 2025," Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/119937>

UN News, "Refugee numbers drop for first time in a decade, but millions remain trapped," June 2026. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2026/06/1167693>