



LSE YouthMUN 2022

SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND HUMANITARIAN COMMITTEE

Dear Delegates,

Our names are Alisha and Anna and we are studying PPE and International Social and Public policy at LSE. As your chairs, it would be our utmost pleasure to have you in SOCHUM (Social, Cultural, & Humanitarian Committee), the 3rd Committee of the General Assembly. SOCHUM is specially tasked with addressing a wide range of social, cultural and humanitarian issues. These range from the advancement of women's rights and the treatment of refugees to criminal justice.

We believe that each committee in the United Nations provides delegates with a lense to view the world with. SOCHUM's broad focus enables you to explore diverse issues that are rich with many practical and ethical implications. In addition, these issues also cannot be neatly divided into 'social,' 'economic' and 'politics' nor viewed in isolation from other issues. Therefore, we must ask ourselves: How are these issues interdependent? Who are the stakeholders and what are their perspectives? How do we compromise between different perspectives and priorities? SOCHUM will enlighten you.

SOCHUM will provide you with a fresh outlook on human rights. Instead of solely discussing how to protect human rights against infringements of it, we will dig deeper and focus on the *conflict of rights*. After all, your right to swing your arms ends where the other man's nose begins. So, whose right is more important in social issues? How will you compromise between the country 'swinging their arms' and the one being hit? Again, SOCHUM will enlighten you. To transport you on this journey of enlightenment, we have chosen the following topics to debate: 'Targeted surveillance of journalists and activists' and the 'Tackling the Social and Humanitarian Issues Stemming from the Illegal Drug Trade.'

For better or for worse, targeted surveillance of journalists and activists is a tale as old as time. However, the development of big data has accelerated this practice (Mills, Sarikakis, 2016) and kept the story unraveling. In July this year, the 'Pegasus Leak' identified 180 journalists in 20 countries who were selected for potential targeting with spyware between 2016 and 2021. Targeted surveillance is an important issue to discuss because it infringes on journalists' and activists' right to life and privacy, but also our right to information and press freedom.

But, this issue is by no means an easy one to discuss. In this story, there are so many characters involved - from journalists to governments to technology firms, who each have their own interests. Potential solutions to this issue, such as limitations on government cyber surveillance, can lead to plot twists, like undetected terrorist activity online.

Your challenge will be finding the happiest “ending” possible - a nuanced solution that protects journalists and activists while enabling governments to conduct cyber surveillance for national security!

Another story that is captivating to delve into is the social and humanitarian issues caused by the illegal drug trade. The War on Drugs has been a pressing issue for decades. Illegal drug trade created serious violence and numerous cases of human rights violations, resulting in hundreds and thousands of civilians fleeing from the country. Furthermore, illegal drug trade has fostered corruption and weakened the economy of many countries, which are push factors for emigration. However, the relationships between drug trade, violence, and forced displacement and migration are complex in nature and are subject to contextual differences. Whilst every country wants to reduce the negative impacts from illegal drug trade, varying levels of economic development, reliance on the drug industry, and levels of corruption associated with drug trade meant that some governments have less political will than others. This further complicates the issue. We encourage delegates to consider the social, political, and economic aspects of the debate and think about an international response to this cross-border challenge.

Being a part of SOCHUM will be a fun challenge as well as an insightful experience. The multifaceted nature of the topics in SOCHUM means that we must be balanced in our approach. You will be challenged to ask yourselves: Is a one-size fits all policy possible? Would such a policy be rewarding for some countries and punitive for others? How do we balance the practical and the ethical? Since SOCHUM cannot impose sanctions or use military powers, you must also be creative in your recommendations. Finally, when discussing sensitive issues like human rights, we fully encourage delegates to take up their country’s stances. However, we expect delegates to debate with the utmost respect of other delegates, identities, and beliefs.

We hope that our introduction gives you a sense of what our committee has to offer and that you choose SOCHUM for your journey in YouthMUN.

Yours Sincerely,
Alisha and Anna

