

NHSMUN50

National High School Model United Nations



CCPCJ
UPDATE PAPER



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Hello Delegates!

I welcome you to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ)! My name is Ani Hovhannisian, and I will be your Assistant Director for Session I of NHSMUN 2024! This is my first ever NHSMUN, and I am so excited to spend it with all of you! I am thrilled to see all the research and ideas and get to know everyone!

To begin, I'll introduce myself. I am a first-year student at the University of California, San Diego, studying Neurobiology on a pre-medical track. I aim to pursue an MD/Ph.D. and work in a medical research lab. I love to learn about everything. Outside of school, I love exploring new places and seeing as much as possible. I spend most of my free time hiking or going to the beach. While in high school, I was part of my high school's Model United Nations team and participated in many different committees, but I spent most of my time in CCPCJ. I did MUN for three years and loved every aspect of it. I especially loved the public speaking aspect of it, as I love to talk, and it made me feel confident. I originally joined MUN because I thought I wanted to pursue a career in public policy. However, as my career interests changed, I didn't quit because MUN gave me many different skills, such as leadership and communication, but the main thing it gave me was a community. Some of my closest friends I have met through MUN, and I wouldn't trade them for the world. I hope that during your time in MUN, you can grow your own family, and I believe that the staff and I at NHSMUN will only support this.

When you consider the issues and keep yourself updated as March approaches, it is vital to approach these topics with the utmost care and consideration. This subject affects everyone and influences our society globally. The directors have given you a comprehensive Background Guide that covers many factors, and it is your responsibility not only to understand these factors but also to expand on them and show mastery of this topic. The Update Paper will give you insight into some subtopics of these topics and help you on your research journey. Please stay current on the issues and gather as much information as possible to create the best solutions. I hope NHSMUN brings everyone excitement and proves to be a wonderful experience. We can work together with engaging conversations, so I hope everyone collaborates and challenges the boundaries of the topics at hand.

It is essential to stay informed and connected continuously concerning the world's state. Tolerance and peace are crucial; we must always respect each other's opinions. If we all work together and treat each other fairly, we can progress society into a new age of happiness. With that, I wish everyone the best of luck and all the joy this world can offer. I can't wait to meet everyone and listen to all the beautiful ideas that will be presented!

Ani Hovhannisian

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Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Committee Assistant Director

Session I



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Terry Wang
Ellie White

Dear Delegates,

I am so excited to welcome you to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice for NHSMUN 2024! My name is Avery Nudell-Cook, and I will be your Assistant Director for Session II. I will be working alongside Ani Hovhannisian throughout the conference. This is my first year working on NHSMUN staff. However, I have enjoyed attending NHSMUN all four years of my high school experience from 2020-2023. If you have any questions about NHSMUN or MUN as a whole, don't hesitate to ask!

I was born and raised in New York City, so NHSMUN has always been a quick subway ride. I am currently attending my first year at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania. I am part of an integrated major program in computer science and electrical engineering. I plan to get into international engineering projects with tech companies or governments when I graduate. Outside of school, I love reading, listening to music, rock climbing, and doing wacky projects.

I remember my first year of high school, walking into the committee alone, scared out of my mind, but by the end, I had a wonderful experience. I know this conference is a fantastic experience you will love. I have done MUN for four years, and attending NHSMUN was the highlight of my annual conferences. Being an Assistant Director has allowed me to take a peek behind the curtain and appreciate how much work goes into putting together this conference each year. NHSMUN is a unique conference because it allows you to meet and get to know interesting people worldwide. This conference will help you become more confident in your public speaking and collaboration skills. I know that every one of you will look back on NHSMUN 2024 and see it as an amazing and fun learning experience.

If you have any questions about the conference or feel nervous, please don't hesitate to reach out! The directors have prepared a thorough Background Guide with helpful information. I look forward to hearing all the extra research you will have put in to make the most of this fantastic conference. These Update Papers will help you get the most recent information on these issues, and you will be able to formulate the most relevant solutions. But there is more time between now and the conference! So please continue to stay up-to-date on events for both topics. I can't wait to see what you all bring to the conference, and I look forward to meeting you!

Avery Nudell-Cook

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Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Committee Assistant Director

Session II





CCPCJ

NHSMUN 2024



TOPIC A: NEGLECT AND ABUSE IN PRISON SYSTEMS

Photo Credit: Oxfam East Africa

Introduction

The growth of the female prisoner population since 2000 is nearly triple that of male prisoners. Most of these arrests are connected to poverty and drug laws. These laws affect women more than men, one of many new issues emerging in the global prison system.¹ Many groups like women, LGBTIQ+, children, and the elderly experience worsening conditions and abuse. Increased global prisons being used for financial gain and made private have prioritized profit over inmate rehabilitation. This Update Paper will cover recent events related to these topics and give advice on how delegates can improve resolutions to resolve these issues.

One must first understand the committee's two main subtopics to fix these issues. The first is the unique challenges vulnerable groups face in prison. This covers a range of challenges, including gender violence and policy discrimination, that are often neglected in prison reform discussions. The second is the growing amount of abuse, violence, and harsh conditions caused by prisons being made into a private industry. The second subtopic focuses on exploitative policy and increasing prison labor. The push to privatize prisons and use more prison labor is the economic agenda behind these problems. The CCPCJ must consider its strategies and address these changing issues. The CCPCJ can only fill its role in shaping a humane and effective penal system through thorough research, open perspectives, and unified solutions.

Unique Challenges Vulnerable Populations Face in Prisons

It is essential to acknowledge the health issues that women face in prisons around the world. Former female prisoners, among other vulnerable groups like sex workers, drug users, and transgender women, face issues with late HIV detection.² In many countries of this region, women face discrimination for having HIV, often forced to hide diagnoses because of sexual violence. According to social worker Marina Atabekova, health shelters for women receive an average of 25 to 27 women

each month affected by violence.³ As a result, women often either do not test for or hide their HIV results. When HIV is detected late, a person's immune system is already weakened, so treatment is less effective, increasing health risks.⁴

Sexual abuse from guards is a growing issue in many prisons. Recent reports from Japanese and United States prisons show how prisoners face dehumanization and mental trauma. A guard repeatedly assaulted Latasha Brown in the United States but never spoke out, fearing retaliation. This behavior is typical of female prisoners who face violence. In a quote, Latasha Brown said she felt "trapped" and "couldn't talk to anybody."⁵ Brown faced further potential prison violence if she were to speak out. Brown's story is one of many around the world. A November 2023 Human Rights Watch report on Japanese prisons has similar stories. Japan has one of the highest ratios of imprisoned women and mothers in the world. This has created problems with facility conditions, healthcare access, and violence. Findings provide evidence for "the use of handcuffs on imprisoned women during childbirth."⁶ This shows a clear trend of women experiencing growing violence in prison.

Many countries, including Japan, have limited options other than imprisonment as a punishment. People have little chance of getting fines or limiting sentences with or without probation. This results in people often serving longer prison

1 *Global Prison Trends 2023* (Penal Reform International, June 2023). <https://cdn.penalreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/GPT-2023.pdf>.

2 UNDP, "You Are a Prisoner: Keep Silence and Look Down - How Women in Key Population Groups Face Violence and Cope with Fears," UNDP Kyrgyzstan, October 8, 2023, <https://www.undp.org/kyrgyzstan/stories/you-are-prisoner-keep-silence-and-look-down-how-women-key-population-groups-face-violence-and-cope-fears>.

3 UNDP, "You Are a Prisoner: Keep Silence and Look Down - How Women in Key Population Groups Face Violence and Cope with Fears,"

4 UNDP, "You Are a Prisoner: Keep Silence and Look Down - How Women in Key Population Groups Face Violence and Cope with Fears,"

5 The Guardian, "The Psychological Toll of Repeated Sexual Abuse: Women Prison Guards Speak Out," The Guardian, October 29, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/oct/29/womens-prison-guards-sexual-abuse>

6 Human Rights Watch, "They Don't Treat Us Like Human Beings: Abuse of Imprisoned Women in Japan," Human Rights Watch, November 14, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2023/11/14/they-dont-treat-us-human-beings/abuse-imprisoned-women-japan>.

sentences. This causes much higher prison populations of older women and mothers. Outside of poor conditions and abuse, there is also an economic impact. Japanese prisoners can only buy expensive store items. This was another barrier to getting better food and items. The report questions how closely Japanese prisons follow international prison standards like the Bangkok and Mandela Rules. The report reflects a trend of prisons being unfit to handle growing populations of mothers and older people.⁷ The CCPCJ must take steps to prepare for this changing prison demographic and prevent this trend from continuing.

Prison systems in many countries are very decentralized. Pakistan has multiple inspector generals for each province, all with different prison laws. While federal prison regulations exist, they are minimal. Pakistan has only passed three significant prison reform laws at the national level since 1947.⁸ As a result, standards and laws have not been updated in all the provinces. This creates issues with overcrowding, healthcare access, and mental health treatment. Furthermore, many prisons lack the necessary funding to implement proper healthcare infrastructure and mental health treatment. With all of this, many prisons in Pakistan fall short of international and even domestic standards.⁹ Like Japan, Pakistan's prisons reflect a broader trend in prisons worldwide. This trend is prisons not having the funding to create the infrastructure to handle growing populations of vulnerable groups.

When talking about prison, abuse and poor conditions are often mentioned. However, laws about conviction and sentencing also play a role. In an article by the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, topics like gender and sexual discrimination in capital punishment are addressed. In the article, researchers analyzed the profiles, backgrounds, and crimes of female and sexual minorities. Research showed

strong bias and neglect throughout the judicial process. This includes issues with criminal investigations, sentencing, and access to gender-specific needs on death row. In 11 US states, there are discriminatory laws that increase the chance of LGBTIQ+ people being sentenced to death. Gender and sexual minorities are subject to more significant discrimination on death row. Similar issues occur in countries like Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Sri Lanka, and Uganda.¹⁰ The CCPCJ must address the changing prison dynamics surrounding these groups of prisoners.

Policies about LGBTIQ+ inmates must be approached carefully in committee. In Scotland, there has been debate on the exclusion of transgender female prisoners from all-female prisons. This rule is in place unless in "exceptional circumstances."¹¹ Since there have been attacks by transgender female inmates against female prisoners, some lawmakers cite security concerns as valid reasons. Other lawmakers argue that narrowly focusing on security overlooks the mental damage on mainly peaceful transgender inmates. It is vital to have a balance between ensuring inmate safety and meeting the specific needs of transgender inmates. Transgender inmates are a small population of inmates worldwide.¹² Cases like this show how social dynamics affect prisons worldwide. The CCPCJ must ensure that resolutions are flexible, well-informed, and prepared to handle these changing groups and dynamics.

Another vulnerable group is migrants. The United States leads the world in migrant imprisonment, with over 30 thousand people getting detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) daily. This annually costs a staggering USD two billion.¹³ Much of this is a consequence of policies like the War on Drugs that resulted in expanded immigration prisons. This system is a form of racism, affecting immigrants and people living in areas of high ICE imprisonment.

7 Human Rights Watch, "They Don't Treat Us Like Human Beings: Abuse of Imprisoned Women in Japan."

8 Human Rights Watch, "A Nightmare for Everyone: The Health Crisis in Pakistan's Prisons," Human Rights Watch, March 29, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2023/03/29/nightmare-everyone/health-crisis-pakistans-prisons>.

9 Human Rights Watch, "A Nightmare for Everyone: The Health Crisis in Pakistan's Prisons."

10 World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, "Making Gender Discrimination in Capital Punishment Visible," World Coalition Against the Death Penalty Campaign, accessed December 20 2023, <https://worldcoalition.org/campagne/making-gender-discrimination-in-capital-punishment-visible/>.

11 Libby Brooks, "Trans inmates with history of violence against women to be mostly kept out of female Scottish jails," The Guardian, last modified December 5 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/dec/05/trans-inmates-with-history-of-violence-against-women-to-be-mostly-kept-out-of-female-scottish-jails>.

12 Brooks, "Trans inmates with history of violence against women to be mostly kept out of female Scottish jails."

13 Diaz, et al., "Advancing Research To Address The Health Impacts Of Structural Racism In US Immigration Prisons," Health Affairs 42, no. 10 (October 2023), <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2023.00479>.



Officers with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Credit: U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Physical violence, sexual assault, solitary confinement, and other health risks are common in immigration prisons. Sexual and gender minorities are particularly affected as well. There are calls to change facilities, but increased funding for ICE has not led to significant improvements.¹⁴ The CCPCJ must address these issues surrounding immigrants and the prisons built to detain them. The world is full of push and pull factors for immigrants. Delegates must consider how the prison system may evolve to stem this tide and the necessary changes to ensure immigrants are treated fairly. Anti-drug laws created in the past have not significantly lowered drug use. Instead, they have increased prison populations worldwide, primarily for nonviolent drug offenses. These prisoners make up approximately 22 percent out of 2.2 million prisoners worldwide, with a disproportionately large percentage being women in pretrial detention.¹⁵ Fortunately, recent efforts to decriminalize certain drug offenses are being made in countries like Canada, Australia, and parts of the United States. UN-related changes have also been happening, with a December 2022 UN resolution using more balanced language regarding drug control laws and human rights obligations.¹⁶

These are small but essential steps that should be built upon in committee.

One overlooked but significant part of the global prison population is individuals awaiting trial in jails, also known as pre-trial detention. These people are currently innocent but still experience poor jail conditions and violence. Many of these people often already experience poverty, mental illness, and substance abuse before arrest, so jail time only compounds their problems. This also relates to the cycle of re-arrest and re-incarceration. People leave prisons or jails often with worse mental health, fewer opportunities, and often trauma related to incarceration. Even now, post-pandemic, prisons worldwide are releasing fewer prisoners than before.¹⁷ When they are, the people get stuck in a cycle of poverty, incarceration, violence, exploitation, and ultimately re-incarceration. Related to poverty is a trend of prisons privatizing services. This includes essential rights like phone calls, commissary, and medical care. These privatized services are often low quality and very expensive, placing the financial burden on incarcerated individuals and their families.¹⁸ The CCPCJ must move to interrupt this cycle and allow people to escape. Delegates

¹⁴ Diaz, et al., “Advancing Research To Address The Health Impacts Of Structural Racism In US Immigration Prisons.”

¹⁵ Penal Reform International, “Global Prison Trends 2023 - Drug Policies,” Penal Reform International, accessed December 20 2023, <https://www.penalreform.org/global-prison-trends-2023/drug-policies/>.

¹⁶ Penal Reform International, “Global Prison Trends 2023 - Drug Policies,”

¹⁷ Sawyer, Wendy, and Wagner, Peter “Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2023,” Prison Policy Initiative, last modified March 14 2023, <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2023.html>.

¹⁸ Sawyer, Wendy, and Wagner, Peter “Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2023,”

must also address how prisons become an economic burden on people, not just countries.

From the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region to the United States, Japan, Pakistan, and beyond, the plight of women, LGBTIQ+ individuals, immigrants, and people affected by the War on Drugs highlight the failures of the global prison system. Problems of health disparities, sexual abuse, violence, and discrimination faced by vulnerable groups within prison walls demand urgent attention. As the CCPCJ addresses these evolving prison dynamics, resolutions must prioritize flexible, well-informed policies that recognize changing social dynamics and prison demographics. Moreover, the CCPCJ should advocate for reforms in sentencing policies, consider the impact of immigration on imprisonment, and work towards dismantling the destructive cycle of poverty, violence, and incarceration.

Growing Disparities from Increased Prison Commercialization and Privatization

The intersection of prisoner exploitation and the growing use of private prisons presents a multifaceted challenge within the global prison system. A December 2023 paper by the Harvard Law Review covers just one of these issues: prison labor. They predict that damage from climate change will result in a growing demand for labor. This labor will start to be fulfilled by increased usage of prison labor and policies to expand that system. The paper ultimately calls for litigation to curb the expansion of unchecked prison and prison labor.¹⁹ California's Conservation Camp Program in the United States is one example of these prison labor programs. According to the ACLU, prisoners volunteering for labor camps may not be a free choice. This is due to the huge contrast between camp and prison conditions. This incentivizes prisoners to participate in camp labor because of the better housing

environment. Outside of the United States, Angolan prisons have walked the line between a historical system of chattel slavery and an emerging prison labor system. Many experts argue that incarceration is becoming a legal form of slavery.²⁰ It is true that unions, fearing worker displacement, have restricted prison labor from specific industries. Nevertheless, the industries that allow prison labor will continue to expand the use of prison labor programs. The CCPCJ must consider how outside factors like climate change create demands for labor that countries may try to fulfill by developing the prison system.

There are drastic differences between the protections of prisoners in private and public prisons. While separations of policy were intended to prevent exploitation, it has led to disparities between prison labor populations instead. Pay, work opportunities closer to release, and rehabilitative skills training are all things that need to be improved.²¹ Furthermore, private prisons in countries like the United Kingdom have issues with work conditions, confusing regulatory systems, and potentially exploitative partnerships with outside companies not excluded by existing law.²² As the CCPCJ explores these issues, it is crucial to attack the economic agenda that many prisons, especially private ones, are built upon.

An October 2023 report outlines the economic dynamics of the United States prison industry well. Unfortunately, the main idea of the report is that higher prison populations lead to higher profits for associated businesses. These businesses are diverse, including companies making money from prison phone operations, commissary items, and even selling security dogs, handcuffs, and pepper spray.²³ The report discusses how a potential slowdown in the prison industry could decrease prison phone company profits due to lower consumer spending. To mitigate this, the report discusses increasing tablet rollouts in prisons as a potential solution. This is one example where companies have a direct economic incentive

19 Harvard Law Review, "Climate Carceralism: The Future of Climate-Linked Prison Labor," 137 Harv. L. Rev. 706 (December 2023), <https://harvardlawreview.org/print/vol-137/climate-carceralism-the-future-of-climate-linked-prison-labor/>.

20 Harvard Law Review, "Climate Carceralism: The Future of Climate-Linked Prison Labor."

21 Jarman, Ben "Rights and wrongs of prison labour laws explored in new ICPR briefing," World Prison Brief, Institute for Criminal Policy Research, Birkbeck - University of London, 9th November 2023, <https://www.prisonstudies.org/news/rights-and-wrongs-prison-labour-laws-explored-new-icpr-briefing>.

22 Jarman, Ben "Rights and wrongs of prison labour laws explored in new ICPR briefing."

23 S&P Global Ratings, "Credit FAQ: Could A Slowdown Shackle The U.S. Prison Industry?" (October 12, 2023), https://www.spglobal.com/_assets/documents/ratings/research/101587525.pdf.

to expand the prison system. It goes beyond that. Companies have a significant interest in state prison budgets and resulting policies. Litigation also poses a concern, with the report citing examples of lawsuits against companies like GEO and CoreCivic.²⁴ The report portrays the lawsuits as another credit risk for the companies. The CCPCJ must examine connections between large corporations and the prison system. By doing that, delegates will understand the economic agenda that companies and governments have and be better equipped to solve the issue.

Understanding the economic agenda of prison-affiliated companies is crucial. However, it is also essential to acknowledge the increasing amount of prison commercialization and privatization. Furthermore, the CCPCJ must analyze how this has led to worsening conditions and escalating violence in prison. However, the nuances between policy decisions, prison reform, and changes to the parole system are less acknowledged. All prisons are meant to rehabilitate offenders, but this is far from the reality. Prisoners lack the incentive to be rehabilitated or comply with rules, and this is due to the perceived hopelessness of their situations.²⁵ Many prisons are understaffed, resulting in more lockdowns and heightened violence. Prisoners experience frequent mental trauma and

violence, the opposite of a rehabilitative environment. Due to this, prisoners often leave prisons worse than when they come in. More resources are needed to address mental trauma, a root cause of re-incarceration, and future violence in prison. With that, delegates must prioritize attacking root issues and not only the symptoms of those issues.

Delegates must consider how poor prison conditions and violence often stem from overcrowding. One hundred twenty countries experience inmate populations exceeding prison capacity. Shockingly, 15 countries experience prison overcrowding at more than 250 percent capacity. Moreover, the main reason for overcrowding is high pretrial detention rates. To put it into numbers, over 120 countries detain more people waiting for pre-trial than actually convicted prisoners. This makes up approximately one in three people in prison populations worldwide. Moreover, prisons have limited transparency and data availability worldwide. This practice in prisons lowers the reliability of recorded deaths in jail and custody. Furthermore, it prevents governments, NGOs, and other entities from using data-backed approaches to identify and solve prison issues. While data may be less available, technology is not in some prisons. Some prisons have successfully implemented unique technology to aid

²⁴ S&P Global Ratings, “Credit FAQ: Could A Slowdown Shackle The U.S. Prison Industry?”.

²⁵ Reutter, David M. “Breaking the Cycle of Understaffing, Lockdowns and Increased Violence in Prisons,” Prison Legal News, October 15, 2023, <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2023/oct/15/breaking-cycle-understaffing-lockdowns-and-increased-violence-prisons/>.

CoreCivic Houston Processing Center

Credit: Patrick Feller



inmate rehabilitation and other purposes. These purposes range from independent prisoner monitoring to prison inspections, helping ensure safety and accountability.²⁶ Overall, many technologies have a lot of positive potential for prisons. However, not all prisons have access to proper technology, creating what is known as the digital maturity gap. Nevertheless, by effectively utilizing technology, the CCPCJ can reduce this gap and combine the new digital age with an outdated prison system.

New technology must always be considered when looking at the prison system. Technology conferences are the primary sources of potential. One example is the Technology in Corrections Conference organized by the European Organization of Prison and Correctional Services. Conferences like this seek to create a positive relationship between technology, the digital age, and prison rehabilitation.²⁷ These conferences also try to find the right balance between integrating technology and maintaining prison security. This consists of limiting ways inmates and people can negatively exploit new prison technology for things like cybercrime. Technology has the potential to benefit significantly a system desperate for an update. If misused, however, it can worsen an already global issue.

Navigating the complex landscape of deteriorating prison conditions, neglect, inmate exploitation, and prison privatization presents a multifaceted challenge for the CCPCJ. Outside factors like climate change creating the need for labor necessitates policy that limits unchecked prison and prison labor growth. International disparities in human rights protections highlight the necessity for global cooperation. Furthermore, delegates in the CCPCJ must account for a wide array of prison infrastructures and policies. Addressing the economic agendas of significant corporations embedded within the prison system is another crucial issue. Root causes like understaffing, poverty, overcrowding, and prison trauma must also be targeted to ensure proper inmate rehabilitation. Prison systems must cooperate to ensure data transparency and availability, enabling evidence-based approaches. Finally, the ethical integration of technology into correctional systems

must be carefully considered. Delegates must ensure their resolutions adapt to an evolving landscape of innovative technology, corporate investment, and government policies. Only by looking ahead will the CCPCJ be able to stop negative prison trends and ensure prisons are a place of rehabilitation, not profit.

Conclusion

From the unique challenges vulnerable populations face in prison to the toxic effects of prison commercialization and privatization, comprehensive reform is urgently needed. The CCPCJ must prioritize placing vulnerable groups like women at the forefront of reform initiatives. Targeted interventions, like improved healthcare services, trauma-informed care, and gender-responsive approaches, are essential in combating the prevalence of gender violence, health disparities, and discrimination within the prison system. Furthermore, these changes are underscored by elements of exploitation, neglect, and worsening conditions within prisons experiencing a shift in priority from inmate rehabilitation to profit. Profit-driven motives and unethical practices associated with private prisons necessitate increased accountability and regulation. The CCPCJ should eliminate exploitative practices, promote transparency, and shift the emphasis from punishment to effective rehabilitation. The dignity of prisoners, regardless of their incarceration status, is essential. This can only be done by focusing on restorative justice, education, skill development, and community re-integration.

By embracing collaborative efforts and adopting a comprehensive approach, the NHSMUN 2024 Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice can be pivotal in advocating for these reforms. Through international cooperation, policy recommendations, and awareness campaigns, the committee can strive to create a more just and humane incarceration system that upholds the rights and well-being of all individuals involved. Only through such concerted action can we move closer to a society that values

²⁶ Penal Reform International. *Global Prison Trends 2023* (Penal Reform International, June 2023). <https://cdn.penalreform.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/GPT-2023.pdf>.

²⁷ European Organisation of Prison and Correctional Services (EuroPris), "Technology in Corrections Conference (2024)," accessed December 20 2023, <https://www.europris.org/events/technology-in-corrections-tic-conference-2024/>.

rehabilitation, equality, and the principles of justice within the penal system.



CCPCJ

NHSMUN 2024



TOPIC B: TERRORIST, GANG, AND ORGANIZED CRIME RECRUITMENT VIA THE INTERNET

Photo Credit: AMISOM Public Information

Introduction

Technology is one of the fastest-growing industries in our world. As of October 2023, there are 5.3 billion internet users worldwide, over 65.7 percent of the human population.¹ While this is beneficial regarding the resources and education opportunities people can access, it also increases online dangers.

As the number of users and engagement increases, it becomes easier for criminal organizations to use the internet to target innocent people.² One of the most notable examples of this issue is the rise of online recruitment methods by extremist groups. Social media has become an increasingly popular method of this. These organizations use platforms like Telegram and online job scams to connect with people, especially many youths. With even more accessible access to the web in the present day, recruitment methods are only a click away. Unmonitored or quickly gained access to information has become an increasing problem. Applications such as Telegram can provide easy avenues for messaging, which are difficult to monitor.

With new technology, the methods of recruitment used by extremist groups are more available than ever. The leading victims of this are children, who are easily exploited.³ With rising living costs, groups lure people towards “lucrative jobs” that end up recruiting them into gangs, terrorist, or criminal organizations.⁴ These traps allow for specific yet easily targeted recruitments to take place. With applications like Roblox having over 3.22 billion players worldwide, many radicals can reach a sizable portion of the population.⁵ This allows these orders to promote their propaganda and worldview. In such quickly morphed spaces, anyone can become a victim of online recruitment. Regarding this issue, it may only be a matter of time.

Although the internet undoubtedly benefits society, the negative impacts must be addressed. Without the proper solutions and measures to combat the rise of online recruitment,

more people will become victims of these schemes. Measures must be taken to help those who are vulnerable from falling victim to these extremist groups. This can only be done by creating solutions that protect every person applicable. With new applications and methods appearing daily, delegates must consider the changing landscape of technology. Online recruitment is a significant issue that covers many topics, but this Update Paper will go into recent specifics. Delegates of CCPCJ must approach this topic while understanding the criminal recruiting process and propose interconnected solutions. Using this Update Paper, delegates should work together to make a comprehensive resolution.

Case Study: Telegram

The rise of the internet brought online communication to the general public. Chat platforms gained popularity in the early 2000s and are mainly used today. Challenges arise because of the many brands of phones and software systems out there that need more standardization. App creators saw this issue and attempted to create universal messaging apps. This led to the rise and creation of many social media messaging sites in 2013.⁶ Such apps, like Telegram and WhatsApp, were created to appeal to a large audience. Telegram completes this goal through its accessibility for all. A recent study by Iranian Undergraduate Law students found that the language used across the app was “trusting.” As a result, young people feel comfortable using the app freely without taking careful measures.⁷ However, this app is one example of the dangers of

1 Ani Petrosyan, “Internet and Social Media users in the world 2023,” Statista, October 25, 2023 <https://www.statista.com/statistics/617136/digital-population-worldwide/>.

2 Petrosyan, “Internet and Social Media.”

3 “2023 Trafficking in Persons Report,” US Department of State, December 15, 2023, <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/>.

4 “Online gaming platforms such as Roblox used as ‘Trojan horse’ for extremist recruitment of children, AFP warns,” *The Gaurdian*, December 2, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/dec/03/online-gaming-platforms-such-as-roblox-used-as-trojan-horse-for-extremist-recruitment-of-children-afp-warns>.

5 “Online gaming.”

6 “Telegram,” Encyclopædia Britannica, November 29, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Telegram-software>.

7 Marjan Lotfi-Khajouel and Hadi Salehi, “Effects of Using Telegram on Iranian Undergraduate law Students’ Vocabulary Learning: Gender

the Internet. Although Telegram states that it bans extremist views, its policies are quite relaxed. In recent years, Telegram has become a hot spot for terrorist recruitment due to the lack of regulation in the app.⁸ Many terrorist groups use Telegram to communicate with potential recruits and spread their ideology. Without a proper solution, the usage of Telegram and other such services continues to go unchecked and allows such organizations to grow.

Telegram, known formally as Telegram Messenger, is a social media platform with both public and private channels for users to communicate. Unlike other platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter, Telegram is not owned by any major company. For this reason, they make their own rules and have their methods of operation, including their privacy policy.⁹ Additionally, few internet users read the entire apps' terms and conditions before downloading them. Internet users are often unaware of the environment they are joining when downloading apps such as Telegram. Telegram can be used as long as the user has a connection to the internet, regardless of where in the world or what type of software they are using. This makes the platform very popular because people

use Telegram to talk to distant families and individuals with different phone brands. The population of Telegram users ranges from young children to older people. The app is also free to download, attracting many people to the site. It is used globally with over 700 million monthly active users.¹⁰ Many people use Telegram as their primary communication and the only way they consume media and news. Because the app has fewer regulations, content is always posted, and most is never taken down. Telegram also has a few information filters, allowing users to spread their thoughts, no matter the message. While such apps serve valuable purposes in connecting people to their loved ones, their potential implications must not be ignored.

The United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "no one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation."¹¹ This right protects people from anyone invading their privacy and extends into their internet usage. Telegram and other apps fall within this right despite their associated dangers. However, one's right to privacy must be balanced by questions of international security.

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8 Vittoria Elliott, "Telegram's Bans on Extremist Channels Aren't Really Bans," *Wired*, November 28, 2023, <https://www.wired.com/story/telegram-hamas-channels-deplatform/>.

9 "Telegram: A New Era of Messaging" Telegram, December 23, 2023

10 Petrosyan, "Internet and Social Media users in the world 2023."

11 UN General Assembly, Resolution 217/3, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, A/RES/67/28, (Dec. 10, 1948), <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>



Crowd of Trump supporters marching on the US Capitol on 6

Credit: TapTheForwardAssist

The need to strike a balance rises when apps like Telegram are used for criminal recruitment. Claims of “right to privacy” often restrict authorities from tracking apps like Telegram. Since Telegram’s system codes all messages with different decryption keys and spreads them across other servers, private chats are challenging to track without significant privacy violations. This makes finding private chats next to impossible for even Telegram engineers, which is why it is challenging to follow terrorist groups because harsh surveillance is a threat to the rights of each individual.¹² This gap between two competing ideas allows private apps like Telegram to become a breeding ground for criminal behavior. Such behavior is further encouraged by Telegram’s strict security servers.

Telegram’s promise of “private messaging” breeds an environment of secrecy on the app. Although this may come from an intention to protect peoples’ conversations, it creates a safe space for criminal organizations. This protects civilians from having their messages read by anyone but also ensures that terrorist groups can spread their message without fear or heavy repercussions. In recent years, many significant crimes involved the use of Telegram. The raid on the US capitol on January 6, 2021, for example, was believed to be arranged using Telegram.¹³ In countries with strict government censorship, many choose Telegram as their primary social media platform because it allows them to talk to anyone and access any information they want.¹⁴ While this is great for people under restrictive regimes and those in an active war zone, the lack of regulations allows anyone to use Telegram and spread any message they wish.

Regarding online recruitment, extremist groups could utilize Telegram as their primary source of communication.¹⁵ In late 2023, two men in Ontario, Canada, were arrested for

creating “TerrorGram Manifestos” to be shared on Telegram. These men made recruitment videos for Atomwaffen Division (AWD), which is recognized as an “international neo-Nazi terror group” by the Canadian government.¹⁶ AWD has a well-known past of being heavily advertised on Telegram, where members have created instruction videos on how to carry out racial violence.¹⁷ Through appealing to loneliness and creating a welcoming environment, groups like AWD use Telegram to recruit and teach criminal behavior to their victims. This guarantees that beyond just social media content, these terrorist groups can spread their message by creating group chats and direct messaging. This makes manipulation and recruitment so much easier for these organizations because they can connect directly to the internet user and personally convince them to join their cause. This example is only one of many instances in which Telegram has offered a platform for criminal recruitment and radicalization.

When analyzing such terrorist groups, two main factors are involved in establishing their operations. These are the ability to spread their information and stay undetected. These organizations can only stay alive if they grow in numbers without being prosecuted by the law. Such an effort requires balancing a solid online presence and a lack of detection. This combination is challenging to balance, as it is very contradicting. Thus, when looking for online platforms to use, Telegram is an extremist haven. With few regulations stopping users from posting, anyone can use the platform as they wish. In fact, Telegram has stayed away from affiliation with governments or law enforcement, stating that freedom of expression is the number one priority.¹⁸ In addition to having lax policies, Telegram operates like a hybrid social media and messaging application.¹⁹ This dual model has made online

12 “Is Telegram Encrypted? What that means for Corporate communications,” Membedit, accessed December 26, 2023, <https://membedit.io/blog/is-telegram-encrypted-what-that-means-for-corporate-communication/>.

13 Ali Breland, “How Telegram became the Center of the Internet,” *Mother Jones*, December 1, 2023 <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2023/12/telegram-ukraine-gaza/>

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15 Lazerson, R.Y., *Platform Characteristics and Cross-Platform Extremism: A Case Study of Telegram* (Berkeley Center for Security in Politics, October 20, 2023), <https://csp.berkeley.edu/2023/10/20/platform-characteristics-and-cross-platform-extremism-a-case-study-of-telegram%EF%BF%BC/>.

16 “Two Ontario Men Arrested on Terrorism Charges,” Royal Canadian Mounted Police, December 8, 2023, <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/news/2023/two-ontario-men-arrested-terrorism-charges>.

17 Royal Canadian Mounted Police Government of Canada, “Two Ontario Men Arrested on Terrorism Charges.”

18 Lazerson, *Platform Characteristics and Cross-Platform Extremism: A Case Study of Telegram*.

19 Caroline Crystal, “Facebook, Telegram, and the Ongoing Struggle Against Online Hate Speech,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 7, 2023, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/09/07/facebook-telegram-and-ongoing-struggle-against-online-hate-speech-pub-90468>.

recruitment even easier for terrorist groups as they can share their message in an anonymous format on public channels while also messaging whomever they would like privately. Because of its anonymous nature, extremist organizations can reach a multitude of people and reach new audiences.

A seemingly simple solution would be to make posting more restrictive and ensure that Telegram adopts filters and regulations like other popular social media platforms. An even easier solution would be to shut down the app entirely. However, Telegram prides itself on its unique nature as a free speech and expression platform.²⁰ In fact, the creator of Telegram said once in an interview that “[t]he right for privacy is more important [to Telegram] than our fear of bad things happening, like terrorism.”²¹ This is a distressing example of how the line between free speech and protection is unbalanced on such apps. In some cases, people have benefited from the information they read through Telegram.²² In this sense, Telegram is vital for many people, and deleting the app could put many people in danger. Telegram’s long history of providing criminals with a communication platform clarifies that regulations must be placed on the app. Without legislation to shut down channels for online criminal recruitment, apps such as Telegram will continue allowing and platforming such acts.

Overall, examining Telegram requires considering both the technology’s good and bad sides. Without the proper solutions, online recruitment will continue and endanger more people. Terrorist groups have made the application a hotspot for recruitment, which raises the question, how should the international community respond? When considering solutions, delegates must maintain the privacy and safety of innocent people and victims while focusing on the prevention of recruitment. Despite the rapid growth of technology, the CCPCJ must find a way to predict, counter, and ultimately

stop the spread of recruitment via the Internet for the greater good of all people.

Internet Crime and Theft

The global average for daily screen time in 2024 is six hours and 58 minutes.²³ Society’s increased reliance on technology does not come without drawbacks. As people spend more time on the internet, some find ways to profit off the web. As accessibility to the Internet and knowledge of technology has increased, so has the number of schemes possible through the web. In recent years, the world’s economy has fluctuated, making more and more people turn to the fast-growing internet to make some extra cash. From online jobs to social media to investing, there will always be a novel way to make a lot of money online. However, with this comes the knowledge that some people will create fake chances to make money to steal others’ money and identity.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, the remote job market grew exponentially as many people lost their jobs and the economy took a hit.²⁴ With the job market thriving, there was also an increase in scammers. Studies have shown that the number of scams that happen online has doubled²⁵ since the COVID-19 pandemic compared to before. Along with scammers, extremist groups have been using those going through financial hardships to entice them to join their ranks. This is a scam on its own, as these organizations promise a lot of money if users carry out illegal jobs for them.²⁶ Victims of these scams are lured with the hopes of making money to help their families and instead find themselves trapped inside extremist organizations with too much debt and illegal activity to leave. As this issue continues to harm thousands of people, delegates must find a way to stop these scammers from further hurting innocent people.

20 Jackie Singh, “Telegram Remains a Haven for Hate Speech Shielded by Corporate Secrecy,” *Hacking, but Legal*, December 1, 2023, <https://www.hackingbutlegal.com/p/telegram-remains-a-haven-for-hate>.

21 “Terrorist on Telegram,” *Counter Extremism Project*, accessed December 27, 2023, <https://www.counterextremism.com/terrorists-on-telegram>.

22 Breland, “How Telegram Became the Center of the Internet”

23 Josh Howarth, “Alarming Average Screen Time Statistics,” *Exploding Topics*, December 4, 2023, <https://explodingtopics.com/blog/screen-time-stats>.

24 “Chart Book: Tracking the Recovery From the Pandemic Recession,” *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*, December 21, 2023, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/economy/tracking-the-recovery-from-the-pandemic-recession>

25 “Top Ten Scams - 2020,” *Fraud!Org*, Accessed December 22, 2023 <https://fraud.org/top-ten-scams-20/>

26 Juliana Kim, “Online scamming industry includes more human trafficking victims, Interpol says,” *NPR*, December 10, 2023 <https://www.npr.org/2023/12/10/1218401565/online-scamming-human-trafficking-interpol>

There are a multitude of different fraud schemes that people can fall victim to on the internet. One of these has been “money mules,” which is when gangs recruit older people to allow their bank accounts to be used in scams. This has increased risks for people in their 50s and 60s as the cost of living rises globally. The money mules are not involved in crime but allow their accounts to be used as scams where money is shifted quickly from one bank to another. Criminals need somewhere to deposit, legitimize, and launder money. They recruit by posting fake advertisements on job websites or social media, with a specific target of older people in financially complicated situations. For instance, criminals tell money mules they will send them EUR 5,000, and only EUR 4,000 will be drawn from the account, that EUR 1,000 is the commission for lending the account.²⁷

Other scams include stealing their victims’ money and identity or even recruiting them to join illegal operations. In some cases, victims might even be sold into human prostitution.²⁸ While this may seem unlikely, it is widespread, and more people fall victim to these schemes daily. People worldwide are being forced to join these illegal scams and work for these

organizations. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a lack of regular pathways to get a job. And because of this, people end up being scammed as they look for ways to earn money. Scammers eventually coerce their victims to work with them and scam others to pay off their “debt.”²⁹

This has been the case in Southeast Asia, where thousands of people have been lured to criminal hubs through fake job offers posted on websites by scammers that are part of substantial human trafficking schemes. Interpol has described it as a “global human trafficking crisis.” The people who fall for these scams end up kidnapped and detained, living in inhuman conditions. Some are subject to verbal, physical, and sexual violence. Moreover, they are forced into criminal activities like fraud. Most victims have been Mandarin-speaking people from China, Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore, who are economically constrained and are excited about a lucrative job in another country. The scam centers were initially in Cambodia, but according to Interpol, they have spread out to Laos and Myanmar. Therefore, a new recruitment modus through scams that started nationally has evolved regionally, and it is feared that it will become a global scheme.³⁰

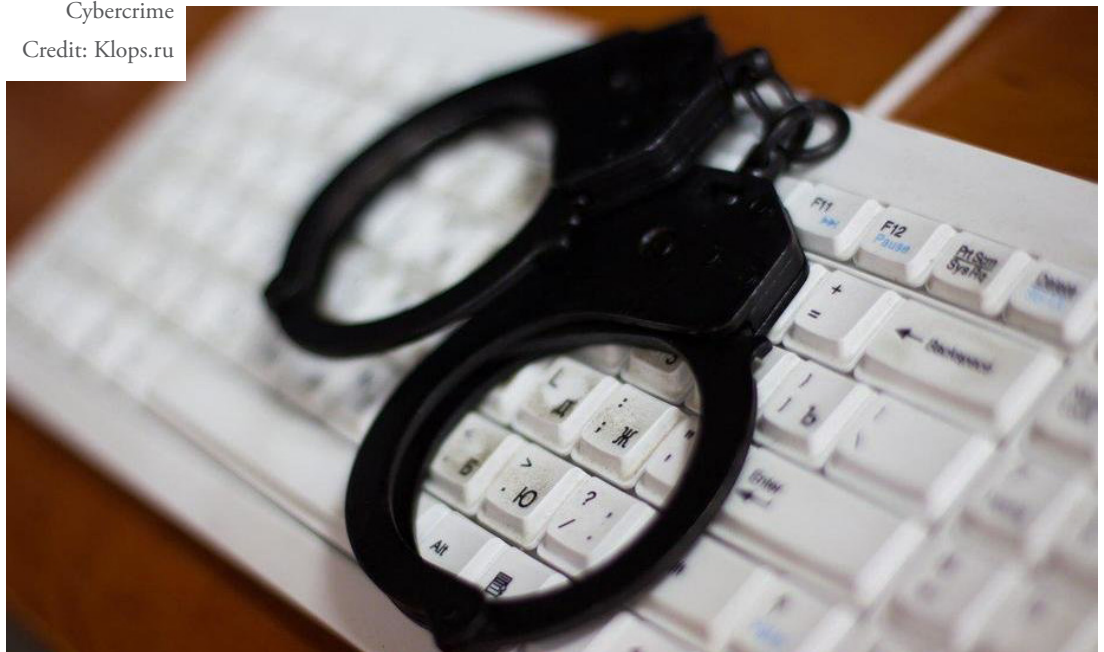
27 Shane Hickey, “Older people hired as ‘money mules’ by gangs as cost of living crisis bites,” *The Guardian*, June 12, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2023/jun/12/older-people-hired-as-money-mules-by-gangs-as-cost-of-living-crisis-bites->.

28 Kim, “Online scamming industry includes more human trafficking victims, Interpol says.”

29 “Hundreds of thousands trafficked into online criminality across SE Asia” *UN News*, August 29, 2023 <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/08/1140187>

30 Jean Iau, “Thousands lured by fake job offers; Interpol warns of imminent threat to public safety,” *The Straits Times*, June 8, 2023, <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/interpol-warns-of-scam-syndicates-role-in-human-trafficking-thousands-lured-with-job-offers>.

Cybercrime
Credit: Klops.ru



Similarly, criminals have developed scams where victims rarely notice they are being recruited. In Australia, an extremist group, through an online scam, recruited people to smuggle drugs into Australia from Singapore. The criminals would pretend to be UN officers and would ask the victims to take the drugs to Australia so that they could finish their business in Singapore before returning. Two of the victims were caught at the Australian Airport after officers suspected them to be carrying drugs. The victims believed that they were doing a good service to the UN and were promised hefty payments in return.³¹ Sometimes, the victims do not realize that they have fallen victim to a scam created by these extremist groups until after it has occurred.

In recent years, with the growth of some terrorist groups such as ISIS, there has been a growth of terrorist propaganda in the media.³² Many smaller extremist groups have pledged their allegiance to other bigger groups. They then use social media to spread their ideologies and support one another. Because of this, there are a lot more messages on the internet that push for these extremist ideologies, and many internet users have started to see a lot more of these extremist groups and the content that they post.³³ With the help of the algorithm that constantly shows media similar to what you have interacted with in the past, once people get a couple of terrorist messages, they tend to get a lot more. This is a manipulation tactic, as some internet users start to believe what the messages are saying because they see it so often. Others may become intrigued as they read more of the ideologies of these groups and question them. Either way, many victims follow the posts or advertisements they see. This is another way they get scammed. After they follow the ad, they may unintentionally download a virus into their device and lose their information. If they are lucky to avoid this fate, they end up talking to someone who is already part of the extremist organization. This person, the recruiter, then talks and convinces the victim

of whatever the advertisement already said.³⁴

It is essential to realize that the victims of these scams are just that: victims. Through education, people can become aware of the manipulation tactics that these extremist groups are using to convince people to join their cause and how they are scamming people into working for them. While some programs teach people how to prevent themselves from being scammed, which is mostly targeted toward older adults, there are not many programs that work with kids and teenagers to prevent them from being recruited and scammed. This is why it is vital to create solutions targeting all types of people from all ages and backgrounds.

Conclusion

With every passing day, there are new ways to utilize the internet. Whether good or bad, it all depends on the user's intentions. However, many internet users are unaware of the danger of using the internet. Whether being scammed or manipulated on Telegram or even playing a game, people are always at risk when they are on the web. Through education and the right policies, we can ensure that these extremist groups are no longer able to endanger and ruin innocent people's lives. By taking away their recruitment opportunities, we take away their power. Criminal groups exploit financial difficulties by enlisting unsuspecting people in their illicit activities. The case studies on "money mules" and recruiting through scams highlight how urgent it is to devise workable ways to stop people from becoming victims of these schemes.

Apart from tackling the difficulties associated with internet recruitment, it is crucial to consider the function of social media platforms and their influence on the propagation of extremist beliefs. Vigilant surveillance is necessary, given the proliferation of terrorist groups on internet platforms. Online

31 "AFP investigating fake United Nations drug mule scam" *Australia Federal Police News*, December 11, 2023, <https://www.afp.gov.au/news-centre/media-release/afp-investigating-fake-united-nations-drug-mule-scam>

32 Johanna S Adap, "The Cyber Battleground: An Analysis on the Use of Social Media for Terrorist Recruitment," Republic of Philippines National Defense College of the Philippines, December 17, 2023, https://ndcp.edu.ph/the-cyber-battleground-an-analysis-on-the-use-of-social-media-for-terrorist-recruitment/#_edn1.

33 Xia Chen Yucheng Dong and Jun Zhuang, "Countering Terrorist Propaganda: Competitive Resource Allocation to Communities," *IISE Transaction*, (December 14, 2023) <https://doi.org/10.1080/24725854.2023.2294457>

34 "How not to fall for the lover boy scam" Europol, October 23, 2023,

recruitment tactics are worldwide in range, so a dedicated multinational reaction is required. It is recommended that delegates look into ways to improve cross-border information sharing and cooperation amongst law enforcement agencies. A complete approach should have strong policies, international cooperation, and education as essential elements. We can all work together to create a safer digital environment by tackling the underlying issues and reducing recruitment possibilities. It is critical that you, as CCPCJ delegates, remain dedicated to developing solutions that protect people from cyberattacks. Delegates should work toward a future free from the threats that criminal groups bring and where the internet is a force for good.

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