



NHSMUN

**SOCHUM**

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**Renata Venzor**

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural (SOCHUM) committee! My name is Erin Ramos, and I will be your Assistant Director for Session I of NHSMUN 2025! This is my first year on staff, but it will be my second year attending the conference. I participated in NHSMUN as a delegate during my senior year of high school in UNCTAD, which inspired me to take a position as one of the ADs for NHSMUN this year because I had so much fun and got the opportunity to meet so many amazing people from all over the world!

I am a sophomore at the University of California, San Diego, studying public policy (political science) and communications, with a minor in business economics. I am deeply interested in the intersection of legal advocacy and media communication and how this plays a role in effecting positive change in the world. Storytelling and journalism have always been ingrained in my passions since I was a kid, and NHSMUN has undoubtedly helped me explore this even more. Outside of school, you can catch me playing golf with my friends, binge-reading corny rom-com books, or listening to R&B and Hip-Hop music.

After being a part of MUN for some years now, it has contributed to my life tantamount. For me, there was no decision to be made about what I wanted to pursue in my formative years in high school and this past year in college: Model United Nations. Being able to grow up with mentors and friends throughout my life who also were very passionate about policy analysis and international relations has always been everything I want in an academic experience and more. I wholeheartedly believe you will all grow into a sense of community like that here at NHSMUN as well!

With that said, the topics we will be discussing in committee this year include: “The Promotion of Human Rights in Venezuela” and “Protection of Human Rights in Myanmar.” Both of these are of utmost importance and highly relevant today. I am looking forward to hearing all of the fruitful discussions and the uniquely fascinating proposals that you will all have developed. Best of luck, and I look forward to meeting you all very soon!

Best,

Erin Ramos

Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee

Session I

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**Renata Venzor**

Welcome to NHSMUN 2025 and the Social Humanitarian Committee! My name is Maria Jesus Di Giosafat Bermudez, but everyone calls me Chus, so please feel free to call me by my nickname! I am delighted to be your Assistant Director for Session 1. This will be my second year attending NHSMUN. The first time I participated was in 2023 as a delegate in the SPECPOL committee, representing China. That experience was incredibly enriching and helped me determine my career path. I could not be happier to return for NHSMUN 2025!

This will also be my 4th year in Model UN. I have attended multiple conferences in Venezuela's National Model UN, and I even served as the Logistics Director for my school's conference. My journey in MUN has been significant for my personal development and has allowed me to make many friends who were once my co-delegates. What I liked most about being on the committee were the creative solutions, creative speeches, and energetic delegates who are always willing to help anyone.

Besides my journey in Model UN, I was born in Caracas, Venezuela, and I currently live there while studying Law at the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello. I truly enjoy my career and the friendships it has brought me. Despite the political circumstances in Venezuela, I love living here; however, I would cherish seeing my country flourish. In my free time, I like to spend time with my family and friends, and I also love listening to music, although I never seem to manage to create a playlist! I previously played golf but had to put it aside for a while. I am eager to pick it up again. For me, the best movie in the world is *The Notebook*—I could watch it a million times!

Additionally, working with Topic A has been quite hard because it has been my reality and the reality of my family since I was little. The struggles we face every day, whether it is securing necessities, dealing with political instability, or witnessing the struggles of our community have deeply influenced my perspective. Growing up in such an environment has shaped my understanding of resilience and the importance of advocating for change.

As your Assistant Director, I look forward to ensuring you have a great time. This is a memorable experience, and I hope you all have an engaging debate. Please do not hesitate to ask for any help you may need; I would be glad to assist!

Best regards,

Chus

Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee

Session I

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**Sofia Velasco**  
**Renata Venzor**

Hello Delegates!

I am excited to welcome you to the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM)! My name is Carlos Ramos, and I will be your Assistant Director for Session II of NHSMUN 2025. This is my first year on the NHSMUN staff and also my first year attending the conference.

I was born and raised in Monterrey, Mexico, and am a Data Science and Mathematics sophomore at the Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey. Outside of school, I love photography, especially on film. I love the grain, and the colors, and waiting to get your rolls back from the lab is a fascinating experience (once you get used to it). I also love collecting old cameras, since they can all be very different and provide a unique experience compared to the rest. I enjoy traveling and have been documenting my trips these past few years. I also love playing the piano and started reading more in 2024. My favorite books read this year were “The Quiet American” by Graham Greene and Mary Shelley’s “Frankenstein”. On the movie side of things, I love Ridley Scott, but especially his older sci-fi movies, my favorites are Alien and the original Blade Runner. Finally, I love a good cup of coffee and got into espresso-making just a few months ago.

I went to my first Model UN conference in middle school, and it has had a massive, very palpable impact on me. Not only has it allowed me to meet a lot of brilliant and dedicated people, but it has also greatly improved my confidence, social skills, and public speaking. The fact that I am still doing it is a testament to all the positive influence it can have on anyone who attends a conference. I hope you can learn a few of these things in your time at NHSMUN.

The two topics at hand are some of the most pertinent and urgent matters on the global agenda, and both your directors and my co-AD and I have prepared a great deal of information and resources for you to have the best preparation possible. As March approaches, please keep researching and staying up to date with both topics. Do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions, concerns, or comments, whether about the committee, conference, or you just need someone to talk to. I’m very excited to meet you all in a few months!

Carlos Ramos

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Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee

Session II



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Dear Delegates!

This year, I have the honor of giving you an incredible welcome to the Social, Humanitarian, & Cultural Committee (SOCHUM) for NHSMUN 2025! My name is Valentina Gomez, and I will be your Assistant Director for Session II! This will be my first year working on the NHSMUN staff, but it is my second year attending the conference. In 2023, I participated as a delegate representing China alongside my partner, Maria Jesus—who, for some of you, is your Assistant Director in Session I—in the SPECPOL committee!

I was born and raised in Caracas, Venezuela, but my entire family is from Spain and Panama—beautiful countries! I am currently in my second semester at Universidad Católica Andrés Bello (UCAB), studying Industrial Engineering. After I graduate, I plan to travel to many places—you never know what life has in store!

I want to mention that I love cooking and, most of all, eating sweets—especially “sugar-free” ones that feel super healthy (even though they rarely are... mainly because of how many I eat!). Lastly, I have to admit that I am addicted to TV series—I love a good show! From Gossip Girl (iconic) and Grey’s Anatomy (top-tier) to Pablo Escobar (such a wild series). That is honestly my perfect plan: sugar-free sweets and a good binge-watch session!

I have been involved in the MUN world since 2022, participating in different committees over the years. Because of this, I can confidently say that MUN is not just a conference—it is an opportunity to discover who we truly are and uncover skills we never knew we had. MUN fosters leadership and teamwork, as working together and combining all our ideas can lead to incredible outcomes. In this case, it even allows us to contribute ideas to address real-world issues in different countries. Personally, MUN has taught me so much about global challenges that often go unnoticed, and it has also given me the chance to meet so many amazing people.

The two topics you will possibly be debating are of extreme importance: Promoting the Rights of Civilians in Venezuela and Protecting Human Rights in Myanmar! I hope to see each of you give your 100%, bringing together all your skills to move forward! Don’t hesitate to reach out if you have any questions. Best of luck!

Valentina Gomez

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Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee

Session II







SOCHUM

NHSMUN 2025



**TOPIC A:  
PROMOTING THE RIGHTS OF CIVILIANS IN VENEZUELA**

Photo Credit: Alexcocopro



## Introduction

The humanitarian crisis in Venezuela is reaching a breaking point as tensions rise from both the election and the regime's growing repression of protests. Civilians continue to be deprived of basic rights and the 2024 presidential elections have reinforced Nicolás Maduro's grip on power. Nicolás Maduro did not win the elections; the rightful and democratically elected president is Edmundo González. However, Maduro staged a coup by swearing himself in despite his loss and using the military to cling to power. This blatant disregard for the electoral process has severe implications for democracy in Venezuela. People around the world criticized the elections because voters were unfairly suppressed, and the process was not clear or transparent.<sup>1</sup> They have sparked renewed concerns about the erosion of democracy and the government's authoritarian practices.

The most recent Human Rights Watch report describes it as one of the most severe human rights crises in the country's recent history.<sup>2</sup> This situation echoes the events of 2017 in which widespread protests erupted after Maduro's government dissolved the opposition-controlled National Assembly and established a new Constituent Assembly to bypass democratic checks.<sup>3</sup> The Fact-Finding mission of the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) intends to pay close attention to events unfolding before and after the presidential inauguration.<sup>4</sup> They are especially focused on exposing policies of silencing the opposition, which is a system attack on the freedom of thought. Since the elections, more than 270 political prisoners are in prison and 19 million people are unable to access needed sufficient health care.<sup>5</sup>

With Maduro's unconstitutional swearing-in for his third term in power on January 10, 2025, mass protests only continued to scale new heights.<sup>6</sup> With that, the Venezuelan opposition faces backlash from the government. Just in December 2024, Venezuela reportedly arrested over 100 foreigners for 'acts

of destabilization.'<sup>7</sup> Maduro issued an arrest warrant after the Venezuelan democratically elected President Edmundo González had to flee to Spain in September of 2024.<sup>8</sup> According to Venezuela's highest court and election body, all opposition to Maduro has been accused of conspiring with foreign governments.<sup>9</sup> This shows a clear step back from democratic principles, where elections are free and fair.

Serious food and medicine shortages, hyperinflation, power blackouts, no access to clean water, and decaying public services have pushed millions into desperation. The health system has collapsed, and hospitals cannot attend patients properly. In return, more than seven million Venezuelans have been forced to leave the country. This has created the largest displacement crisis in Latin America, which threatens to destabilize the region.<sup>10</sup> The international community is under increasing pressure to put an end to the causes of Venezuela's collapse. Without international and local cooperation, this crisis will only continue to escalate, exacerbating long-term complications in the region and the dismissal of human rights.

1 The Carter Center, "The Carter Center Expresses Concern over Electoral Conditions in Venezuela," *Carter Center*, July 30, 2024, <https://www.cartercenter.org/news/pr/2024/venezuela-073024.html>.

2 "World report 2024: Venezuela" Human Rights Watch, accessed January 9, 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/venezuela>.

3 United Nations Human Rights Office of the Commissioner, "Venezuela: Fact-Finding Mission Demands Full Respect for Rights Ahead," OHCHR, January 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/01/venezuela-fact-finding-mission-demands-full-respect-rights-ahead?sub-site=HRC>

4 United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, "Venezuela: UN Fact-Finding Mission Expresses Alarm over Human Rights," OHCHR, July 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/07/venezuela-un-fact-finding-mission-expresses-alarm-over-human-rights>.

5 Human Rights Watch, "World report 2024: Venezuela."

6 Ana Cantero and Vivana Sequera, "Venezuela opposition leader Gonzalez lands in Spain seeking asylum," September 8, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/venezuela-opposition-leader-gonzalez-flies-spain-after-arrest-warrant-2024-09-08/>.

7 United Nations, "Venezuela: UN Rights Experts Sound Alarm over New Wave of Repression," *UN News*, September 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/09/1153841>.

8 Cantero and Sequera, "Venezuela opposition leader Gonzalez lands in Spain seeking asylum."

9 "Venezuela announces the release of 146 election protesters from prison," *Aljazeera*, January 6, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/1/6/venezuela-announces-the-release-of-146-election-protesters-from-prison>.

10 Human Rights Watch, "World report 2024: Venezuela."

## Repression toward Opposition Members and Protestors

July 28, 2024, marked the controversial night that sparked a large voter turnout as people protested against the stolen election. The regime-backed National Electoral Council (CNE) unconstitutionally declared Nicolás Maduro the winner of the election. A crowd of protestors took to the streets after a large number of available tally copies from polling centers estimated that 67 percent of votes were for the opposition candidate, Edmundo González Urrutia.<sup>11</sup> International observers have raised serious concerns about the July 29 announcement by Venezuela's National Electoral Council (CNE) that Nicolás Maduro had been re-elected president. The United Nations (UN), the Carter Center, and other international observers expressed deep concern regarding this lack of transparency and credibility of the results exposed by the CNE.<sup>12</sup> Countries all around the world including the United States, Canada, Peru, Guatemala, Italy, Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, El Salvador, France, the Netherlands, and many others have

recognized Edmundo González as the legitimate president. In contrast, only authoritarian regimes such as Cuba, China, Russia, North Korea, and Nicaragua have recognized Nicolás Maduro as president.<sup>13</sup>

Pacific protests quickly erupted across Venezuela following the CNE's declaration. Venezuelan citizens demanded a fair counting of the votes, but their voices were not only silenced but they also faced punishment. The government responded with targeted persecution of citizens, opposition members, journalists, and other human rights defenders. The Human Rights Watch confirmed the unjust treatment of Venezuelan protests and urged other governments to push for independent verification of the electoral results and support international efforts to ensure accountability.<sup>14</sup> They further documented that the Maduro administration along with pro-government armed groups (*colectivos*) have committed widespread abuses in low-income areas. Some of these include arbitrary detention, harassment of government opponents, and even extrajudicial killings.<sup>15</sup> Concerns of breaching human rights were raised on September 2, 2024, when a judge issued an arrest warrant

<sup>11</sup> "Resultados de Venezuela," accessed January 2025, <https://resultadosconvzla.com/>

<sup>12</sup> "Venezuela: Brutal Crackdown on Protesters, Voters," Human Rights Watch, September 4, 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/09/04/venezuela-brutal-crackdown-protesters-voters>

<sup>13</sup> "Los apoyos internacionales de Maduro y Edmundo González ante la asunción presidencial en Venezuela," Infobae, January 6, 2015, <https://www.infobae.com/venezuela/2025/01/08/los-apoyos-internacionales-de-maduro-y-edmundo-gonzalez-ante-la-asuncion-presidencial-en-venezuela/>.

<sup>14</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Venezuela: Brutal Crackdown on Protesters, Voters."

<sup>15</sup> The Carter Center, "The Carter Center Expresses Concern over Electoral Conditions in Venezuela."



Opposition protesters marched, with tear gas visible

Credit: NoonIcarus



against President Edmundo González. The warrant accused him of “conspiracy,” “incitement to disobedience” and other crimes.<sup>16</sup> Similar warrants have been made against Venezuelan supporters of González.

The Human Rights Watch has exposed verifiable instances of protest-related killings in Venezuela. They show the scale of state violence and the fear instated by Maduro’s government. For instance, they have exposed reports amounting to 24 killings within protests from independent local groups.<sup>17</sup> Some of them have been independently documented by the Human Rights Watch by reviewing death certificates, verifying videos and photographs, and interviewing witnesses and other local sources.<sup>18</sup> This alarming number does not even gather all of the many relatives and witnesses who were not willing to be interviewed due to fear that they would face government retaliation and punishment.

Notably, the abuse does not stop at the unjust attack of protestors by armed forces in the government. The OHCHR Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) has called out that new individuals are detained every single day on the grounds of terrorism and treason from the protests in degrading conditions.<sup>19</sup> In prisons they are subject to inhumane torture and on several occasions, death. Patricia Tappatá, an expert on the Fact-Finding Mission, has declared that “The persecution of opponents to the government...not only continues but has taken the form of a systematic attack on the freedom of those who think differently.”<sup>20</sup>

Since the presidential election has elapsed, patterns of abuse have shifted from large-scale repression to protesters in the streets to more targeted attacks. Tactics like surveillance, harassment, and criminalization have been used recently in

low-income communities where opposition figures against Maduro mostly occur. The FFM warns that Maduro’s government still can “hardline” tools of repression which come in the form of torture and killings.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, media outlets tied to the government play a large role in targeting civilians. This government-funded media spreads propaganda, and silences critics and opposition voices.<sup>22</sup> This allows the government to avoid punishment for serious crimes. Methods like mass arrests and surveillance through mobile phones are used to track critics. Altogether, the Maduro government aims to control its people and keep them afraid to stop them from speaking out.

Beyond that, arbitrary detention and other tactics of repression from the government are not limited to adults. The Maduro regime’s crackdown has instilled fear in younger generations by extending arrests and forms of intimidation to children and teenagers. Amnesty International’s Secretary-General reveals that they have come to expect the worst from Nicolás Maduro’s government. He emphasized that all children suffering from violations from authorities must be released and redressed immediately. Within the past four months, at least 198 children remain subject to unfair detention or falsified criminal charges.<sup>23</sup> The Special Action Forces (FAES), a police unit notorious for human rights violations, was dissolved in 2022 due to sustained international pressure. It was replaced by the Directorate of Strategic and Tactical Actions (DAET). However, DAET has similar functions as FAES. For instance, former FAES officials have been involved in DAET human rights violations, and even hold key roles.<sup>24</sup> In one case, masked members of the FAES illegally raided the Ramos Suárez home. There, six children were beaten and abused by them. According to the testimonies, FAES officers fired inside

16 Human Rights Watch, “Venezuela: Brutal Crackdown on Protesters, Voters.”

17 Human Rights Watch, “Venezuela: Brutal Crackdown on Protesters, Voters.”

18 Human Rights Watch, “Venezuela: Brutal Crackdown on Protesters, Voters.”

19 United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “Venezuela: UN Fact-Finding Mission Expresses Alarm over Human Rights.”

20 United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “Venezuela: UN Fact-Finding Mission Expresses Alarm over Human Rights.”

21 United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “Venezuela: UN Fact-Finding Mission Expresses Alarm over Human Rights.”

22 United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “Venezuela: UN Fact-Finding Mission Expresses Alarm over Human Rights.”

23 Amnesty International, “Venezuela: Torture and Abuse against Children,” *Amnesty International*, November 2024, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/11/venezuela-tortura-abusos-contra-ninos-ninas/>.

24 United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “Venezuela: UN Fact-Finding Mission Expresses Alarm over Human Rights.”

the house to simulate a shootout. This criminalization of children deepens the cycle of oppression, and this is only one example of hundreds.<sup>25</sup>

The OHCHR and the FFM continue to document cases. Children are only one of many concerning demographics that raise cause for urgent response. Sexual and gender-based violence against opponents of the Maduro government is also subject to killings, arbitrary detentions, and abuse.<sup>26</sup> Individuals with disabilities are also accused of terrorism and incitement to hatred among the 2,000 people that have been detained in September of 2024 alone.<sup>27</sup> A campaign called “Operation Tun Tun” led by the DAET attempted to silence critics that they perceived as threats to the regime. It resulted in at least 25 deaths, more than 2,000 arbitrary detentions, forced disappearances, acts of torture, and other grave human rights violations. These security forces have conducted raids without warrants and mass arrests, effectively hosting systematic violence against peaceful protestors.<sup>28</sup>

On August 15, 2024, the National Assembly passed legislation known as the “NGO Law” which jeopardizes the safety and security of organizations across the country.<sup>29</sup> Attorney General Tarek William Saab regularly induces fear among human rights defenders who are involved with UN mechanisms. He threatens them with arrest upon return to Venezuela. Subsequently, on September 17, the FFM warned that there are credible grounds to believe Venezuelan authorities have engaged in crimes against humanity through politically motivated persuasion. To continue this investigation, the Human Rights Council extended the FFM mandate for two years.<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, President Edmundo González, reported his son-in-law, Rafael Tudares, was kidnapped on January 7, 2025. Tudares was kidnapped while on his way to drop off González’s two grandchildren (six and seven years old) at school. Government officials dressed in black intercepted the vehicle and loaded Tudares into a van. The officials did not have an arrest warrant. To this day, Tudares is still missing and the government has not provided any information to the family regarding his safety and well-being.<sup>31</sup>

Compared with other periods over the past decade, the current patterns of repression are at an all-time high and leave populations at imminent risk of crimes against humanity. The vulnerability of Venezuelans who require assistance inside the country has grown to an estimated number of 19 million, showcasing the increased government repression.

## International Perspective on Venezuela

After the controversial elections on July 28, 2024, President Edmundo González, was forced into exile by the government of Nicolás Maduro. Moreover, Spain granted him the asylum he needed. During this time the Spanish Foreign Affairs Minister José Manuel Albares stated, “Gonzalez has requested the right of asylum, and Spain is, of course, going to grant it to him. I have been able to speak with him; he has expressed his gratitude, and I have expressed my happiness that he is well.”<sup>32</sup>

Nonetheless, Spain is not the only country that supports González. Milei, the current president of Argentina, met with González on January 5, 2025. He stated, “We are doing

25 Amnesty International, “Venezuela: Torture and Abuse against Children.”

26 United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “Venezuela: UN Fact-Finding Mission Expresses Alarm over Human Rights.”

27 United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “Venezuela: UN Fact-Finding Mission Expresses Alarm over Human Rights.”

28 Amnesty International, “Venezuela: Torture and Abuse against Children.”

29 “Venezuela passes ‘anti-NGO law’ that punishes efforts to assist victims and defend human rights,” Amnesty International, August 12, 2024, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/08/venezuela-aprobacion-ley-anti-ong-castiga-asistencia-victimas-defensa-derechos-humanos/>.

30 United Nations Human Rights Council, Situation of human rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, A/HRC/57/L.8, 16 (October 4, 2024), <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/ltd/g24/184/07/pdf/g2418407.pdf>.

31 Regina García, “Venezuelan opposition leader says his son-in-law has been kidnapped in Caracas,” Washington Times, January 7, 2025, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2025/jan/7/venezuelan-opposition-leader-edmundo-gonzalez-says/>.

32 Juan Diego Quesada, “Edmundo González Leaves Venezuela and Heads to Spain After Receiving Political Asylum,” *EL PAÍS English*, September 8, 2024, <https://english.elpais.com/international/2024-09-08/edmundo-gonzalez-leaves-venezuela-and-heads-to-spain-after-receiving-political-asylum.html>.





President Joe Biden in a meeting with President Edmundo González  
 Credit: The White House

whatever the cause of freedom requires.”<sup>33</sup> This demonstrates that in some way, the opposition does have international support. Similarly, González has been received by heads of state in numerous countries, including Uruguay, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Panama, the Dominican Republic, and the United States. The United States created the “Bolivar Act”. It aims to formalize the current rules about sanctions on Venezuela into real laws.<sup>34</sup> This was instituted as a form of pressure from the US government on the current Venezuelan government.<sup>35</sup> The US under the Biden administration also decided to recognize Edmundo González as the official winner of the 2024 election. The US State Department representative stated “It is clear to the United States, to democratic states around the world, and to independent international organizations that observed the July 28 elections that opposition candidate Edmundo González Urrutia won the most votes. That makes him the president-elect”. Moreover Edmundo González responded by thanking the United States for recognizing him as the elected president. He stated “We deeply appreciate the recognition of the sovereign will of all Venezuelans. This gesture honors our people’s desire for change and the civic feat that we carried out

together on July 28”.<sup>36</sup>

Moreover, President-elect Donald Trump has supported the Biden Administration in recognizing Edmundo González as President and mentioned “Venezuelan democracy activist Maria Corina Machado and President-elect Edmundo Gonzalez are peacefully expressing the voices and will of the Venezuelan people with hundreds of thousands of people demonstrating against the regime. The large Venezuelan-American community in the United States overwhelmingly supports a free Venezuela. These freedom fighters must not be harmed and MUST remain SAFE and ALIVE!” This occurred on January 9, 2025, after opposition leader, María Corina Machado, was kidnapped in Caracas by regime officials after leaving her hideout to lead a major protest against Nicolás Maduro. She was taken away by force while leaving the rally and had been forced to record several videos. While she was released, 17 other protesters were detained by government forces. Machado’s detention sparked international discourse. “The dictatorial regime is responsible for her life,” tweeted Panama’s president, José Raúl Mulino. Colombia’s former

<sup>33</sup> The Associated Press, “Venezuela Opposition Leader Edmundo González Embarks on International Tour,” *NPR*, January 5, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/01/05/g-s1-41109/venezuela-opposition-leader-edmundo-gonzalez-embarks-on-international-tour>.  
<sup>34</sup> “US imposes sanctions on Maduro allies over ‘illegitimate’ election results,” *Aljazeera*, September 12, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/9/12/us-imposes-sanctions-on-maduro-allies-over-illegitimate-election-results>.  
<sup>35</sup> Ben Studd, “What Does the US’ New ‘Bolivar Act’ Mean for Venezuela?” *Venezuela Solidarity Campaign*, December 17, 2024, <https://www.venezuelasolidarity.co.uk/2024/12/07/what-does-the-us-new-bolivar-act-mean-for-venezuela/>.  
<sup>36</sup> Stefano Pozzebon and Jenifer Hansler, “US recognizes Venezuelan opposition leader Edmundo Gonzalez as president-elect,” *CNN World*, November 19, 2024. <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/11/19/americas/venezuela-gonzalez-president-elect-intl-latam/index.html>

president, Iván Duque, called the detention “yet another demonstration of the vileness of the cowardly dictator Maduro”. Spain’s foreign ministry voiced “total condemnation and our concern” while Argentina’s presidency condemned “the Chavista regime’s criminal attack”.<sup>37</sup>

Additionally, The US Department of State announced it has raised to USD 25 million the reward for information leading to the arrest or conviction of Nicolás Maduro. For context, another individual who had a USD 25 million bounty was Osama bin Laden. The increase comes as a renewed push to apprehend Maduro, who has been under indictment in the US since 2020 for his involvement in drug trafficking and narco-terrorism. He played a central role in the Cartel of the Suns, a Venezuelan drug-trafficking organization made up of high-ranking government officials. Moreover, Maduro coordinated multi-ton cocaine shipments with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), a designated terrorist organization.<sup>38</sup>

This shows that the opposition has found allies beyond their borders. In addition, many countries are becoming more interested in solving this humanitarian crisis since they are seeing its effects on the world as a whole. All of this support strengthens the opposition and allows them to receive external aid. Additionally, it also places pressure on Maduro and his regime from the international community. The combined efforts of many countries are necessary to address the roots of this humanitarian crisis.

January 2025 is historic for Venezuela. Both parties have a plan and a strategy to gain control over the country. Concerning Edmundo González, he established his desire to return to the country and assume the presidency. He has

also urged the military forces to recognize him as their newly elected president. He went on a tour across the Americas to gather international allies. He visited countries such as the US, Uruguay, and Argentina.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, María Corina Machado, an important political actor from the opposition, called on civilians to unite in a powerful display of solidarity and demand change via social media.<sup>40</sup>

The United Nations has recognized the violence and threats that Nicolás Maduro has perpetrated following the elections, stating that it is “one of the most acute human rights crises in recent history.”<sup>41</sup> The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has recently stated that the conditions of the July 28 presidential election severely disrupted Venezuela’s constitutional order. It details that these human rights violations and practices of state terrorism stem from the Maduro regime because it has control over all state institutions, ergo making human rights violations and state terrorism far more reachable for Maduro without consequences. The IACHR agrees and has declared that the re-election of Nicolás Maduro is democratically unlawful. This is because they failed to meet electoral transparency and documented restrictions on political rights.<sup>42</sup>

It is important to highlight that the families of the opposition party members are being affected. Family members of María Corina Machado have been in danger. On the same day of the kidnapping of González’s son-in-law, Machado stated, “A few hours ago, agents of the regime surrounded my mother’s house. [They] set up roadblocks throughout the neighborhood, and flew drones over it. The electricity in the area also went out.”<sup>43</sup> This once again showcases the restrictions of freedoms in the country and that no one is safe.

37 Tom Phillips, “Venezuelan opposition leader María Corina Machado ‘kidnapped’, allies say,” *The Guardian*, January 9, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jan/09/venezuela-maria-corina-machado-kidnapped>.

38 Mauricio Maldonado, “U.S. reward for Venezuela’s Maduro increased to \$25 million in effort to capture him,” *CBS*, January 10, 2025, <https://www.cbsnews.com/miami/news/reward-for-venezuelas-maduro-increased-to-25-million/>.

39 Alonso Moleiro, “Edmundo González Says He Will Take Office as President of Venezuela on January 10,” *EL PAÍS English*, November 25, 2024, <https://english.elpais.com/international/2024-11-25/edmundo-gonzalez-says-he-will-take-office-as-president-of-venezuela-on-january-10.html>.

40 María Corina Machado, January 5, 2025, <https://x.com/MariaCorinaYA/status/1876036412413538315>.

41 Salma Bien Mariem, “UN probe finds Venezuela authorities committed rights violations amid post-election demonstrations,” *Jurist News*, September 17, 2024, <https://www.jurist.org/news/2024/09/un-probe-finds-that-venezuela-authorities-committed-human-rights-violations-amid-post-election-demonstrations/>.

42 Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, “IACHR Expresses Concern over the Deterioration of Democracy in Venezuela,” *Organization of American States (OAS)*, January 2025, [https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media\\_center/preleases/2025/007.asp&utm\\_content=country-ven&utm\\_term=class-ip](https://www.oas.org/en/iachr/jsForm/?File=/en/iachr/media_center/preleases/2025/007.asp&utm_content=country-ven&utm_term=class-ip).

43 María Corina Machado, January 7, 2025, <https://x.com/MariaCorinaYA/status/1876724382502162628>.



Venezuela faces disastrous effects both inside and outside the country. Refusal by authorities to be transparent over the electoral process is harming the country's relationship with other countries and international organizations. Without transparency, the poor legitimacy of the election is causing international isolation. As protests and repression continue, coordinated mitigation strategies from Latin American governments, the EU, Canada, the US, and other critical stakeholders must work together to create a unified plan to reduce the crisis impact to find a resolution to the political solution, where Maduro cedes power to the democratically elected President, Edmundo González. Vulnerable populations would benefit from the international donor community to increase support for civil society organizations that document human rights violations and deliver humanitarian aid.<sup>44</sup> The collaboration of the international community is key, not only to reduce human rights violations but also to contribute to peace and stability that has long been needed in the country.

## Conclusion

Venezuela's most recent elections show the clear stage of crisis that the country has been in for years. The huge amount of arbitrary arrests, killings, and silenced people who were exercising their basic rights and liberties highlights the urgent need for action. The concerns from the international community on the transparency of the election, in addition to the support from several organizations have been helpful. However, the reality is that many Venezuelans still have no access to healthcare services, water and sanitation facilities, or food because of the disruptions erupted by the protests in the country.

The humanitarian crisis that Venezuela is currently experiencing is a result of a series of decisions made in the political, economic, and social spheres that severely affected society as a whole. It is without a doubt that the recent elections in the country have led to countless violations of economic, social, and cultural rights. In addition, many freedoms, such as freedom of speech, thought, and political affiliation have also

been severely hindered. Electoral fraud, human repression, deaths in prison, lack of transparency on the part of the authorities, authoritarianism, and many other issues are the consequences that many Venezuelans are currently suffering and may continue to endure.

The international community is a key element in resolving this situation, as its support can be decisive in beginning to improve the circumstances. The Venezuelan people have been in a critical situation for years, it depends on collective action and the national outcomes and the future of the Venezuelan Community. Therefore, delegates in the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee must continue to fulfill their role of ensuring that the voices of those affected by the crisis are heard on the global stage. Delegates in this committee should work towards the promotion of the fulfillment of human rights of Venezuelans. In addition, delegates should keep in mind the scope of the Third Committee when seeking resolutions on the situation.

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<sup>44</sup> Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, "Venezuela," *Global R2P*, accessed January 2025, <https://www.globalr2p.org/countries/venezuela/>.





SOCHUM  
NHSMUN 2025

WE WANT  
OUR LEADER

တို့အများပြည်သူရေးချယ်  
တင်မြှောက်ထားသောအစိုးရကိုသာ  
ထောက်ခံပါသည်။  
We Want O...  
Govern...

စစ်အာဏာရှင် အလိုမရှိ။  
No Dictatorship

Save Myanmar  
Against Military Coup  
Justice For Myanmar

WE WANT  
OUR LEADER  
FREE  
AUNG SAN SUU

TOPIC B:  
PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN MYANMAR

Photo Credit: Unknown author



## Introduction

After years of conflict, Myanmar is still struggling with many issues concerning the war happening in the country. The protection of human rights in the country is still a priority for the international community, as human rights violations still are a daily occurrence. While there are many ways in which the military junta conducts these violations, the use of landmines to commit several human rights violations has become common. Countless civilians are tortured and even killed at the hands of the military junta. Vulnerable groups such as children and women are often more likely to suffer from the use of landmines.

The blocking of humanitarian aid, in addition to the grave violations from the landmines, has severely affected the human rights of Myanmar's civilians. The international community is very concerned regarding this situation. While many people have tried to lessen the effects of the grave violations that have been occurring, the restriction of humanitarian aid within the country makes it harder to provide help. The Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, a mechanism established by the UN Human Rights Council has further investigated this situation. In their most recent report, they also highlighted the effects that the military junta has on the right to education, healthcare, or even the mental health of the general population.

This pressing issue needs undeniable help from the international community. To achieve this, the next updates on the situation of Myanmar must be considered by delegates to ensure the protection of human rights in the country.

## Landmine Use Fuels Human Rights Abuses

Myanmar's military junta has increasingly committed grave crimes in opposition areas amid resistance and territorial losses in 2024. The junta has conducted attacks against civilians and infrastructure. These attacks range from airstrikes to killings, torture, and more. Additionally, there has been an indiscriminate persecution of political opponents, activists, and journalists. Despite the dire humanitarian situation in the

country, the junta has blocked access to humanitarian aid.<sup>1</sup>

Myanmar is one of only four countries using banned cluster munitions and landmines. The 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production, and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction, the Ottawa Convention, or the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty is the international agreement that bans antipersonnel landmines. As described in the Ottawa Convention, an anti-personnel is a mine designed to be exploded by the "presence, proximity, or contact of a person and that will incapacitate, injure or kill one or more persons."<sup>2</sup> 164 states are party to the Ottawa Convention. Nevertheless, Myanmar is not a signatory to the Ottawa Convention.<sup>3</sup>

The junta has claimed the lives of over 1,052 people and additionally, the survivors have been denied aid such as medical care and prosthetics. Tom Andrews, Special Rapporteur on Myanmar, and Heba Hagrass Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities said: "The junta is doubling the impact of its extensive use of landmines to crush nationwide resistance." The junta's human rights violations have increased and are only expected to continue this year if no action is taken. The rapid use of landmines has led to countless violations of international law including Article 11 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and UN Security Council resolution 2475 on protecting persons with disabilities in war.<sup>4</sup>

Myanmar overtook Syria last year to become the country with

<sup>1</sup> "Myanmar: 'Scorched Earth' Tactics Intensify." Human Rights Watch, January 15, 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/01/16/myanmar-scorched-earth-tactics-intensify>.

<sup>2</sup> "Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention," United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, accessed January 17, 2024, <https://disarmament.unoda.org/anti-personnel-landmines-convention/>.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, "Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention."

<sup>4</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Myanmar: 'Scorched Earth' Tactics Intensify."

the highest number of people killed or injured by landmines and explosive remnants of war. Ukraine and Afghanistan accounted for the third and fourth-highest number of casualties globally.<sup>5</sup> Just in January 2025, a junta air strike killed 15 civilians and wounded 10 others in Kachin state. While the state hosts the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), those killed were gold miners and local shopkeepers. In another state, the Arakan Army reported that the junta had dropped 15 bombs during three attacks on a public market in the town, wounding and even killing multiple civilians.<sup>6</sup>

Children are the primary population affected by this considering that over 20 percent of the casualties are children. Additionally, the landmines are placed around homes, schools, and playgrounds, inevitably targeting children.<sup>7</sup> Evidence has shown that the military has used civilians including children as “guides” to walk ahead of the soldiers, using them as human shields.<sup>8</sup>

Farmers have largely been affected as well. Countless farmers

have been wounded or have even lost their lives when working in the fields. Additionally, landmines have injured or killed livestock in the country. However, that is not all. The military has threatened farmers that they must pay for mines detonated by their livestock. It has been reported that soldiers have asked owners of cows injured or killed by mines to pay USD 714.97.<sup>9</sup> It is key to consider that agriculture is the second-largest export of the country and involves over half the country’s workforce.<sup>10</sup> A blatant disregard for the lives of farmers addresses the immediate need for the international community to take action and address the urgent humanitarian needs.

It is evident beyond belief that crimes against humanity have been committed during this conflict. Under international law, these crimes can be prosecuted if a claim is presented before the International Criminal Court (ICC). Some actions have been taken. ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan has warned that violations of international law continue to escalate in Myanmar. On November 27, 2024, the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC

5 Rebecca Tarcliff, “Myanmar overtakes Syria as country with highest landmine casualties,” *The Guardian*, November 20, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/nov/20/myanmar-landmine-casualties>.

6 “Myanmar Junta Air Strike Kills 15 Civilians: Ethnic Rebel Group,” *The Defense Post*, January 12, 2025, <https://thedefensepost.com/2025/01/12/myanmar-junta-air-strike-2/>.

7 Vibhu Mishra, “Children and amputees bear brunt of Myanmar’s deadly landmine epidemic,” *UN News*, November 22, 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/11/1157391>.

8 Tarcliff, “Myanmar overtakes Syria as country with highest landmine casualties.”

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10 Alejandro González-Caro and Sajib Azad, “Agriculture in Myanmar: Current State and Challenges – Part 1,” *eTrade for all*, April 3, 2024, <https://etradeforall.org/news/agriculture-in-myanmar-current-state-and-challenges-part-1/>.



Min Aung Hlaing

Credit: Vadim Savitsky, mil.ru



Hlaing, the army general who has ruled Myanmar as the chairman of the State Administration Council (SAC) since seizing power in February 2021. While the investigation focuses on crimes against the Rohingya, Khan’s reference to additional applications indicates the ICC may also address other crimes. Additionally, the European Union and the United States have imposed sanctions on Min Aung Hlaing including bans on travel and asset freezes. While this is a small step, it is a step in the right direction to achieve reparation for all those affected by the conflict.<sup>11</sup>

## Endangered Human Rights

While it is clear that the root of this conflict is political, countless violations of human rights have occurred since the start of it. The Independent Investigative Mechanism

for Myanmar stated that in the last year, there has been an increase in war crimes and crimes against humanity.<sup>12</sup> A major concern is that most of the evidence points to having civilians as targets.<sup>13</sup> It is reported that at least 2,414 civilians were killed in 2024.<sup>14</sup> The unsafe situation has led to over three million people being displaced throughout Myanmar.<sup>15</sup> It has also further worsened the humanitarian situation. Over 18.6 million need humanitarian assistance and over 15 million are food insecure.<sup>16</sup>

Two basic human rights that have been deeply affected by the current situation are the right to healthcare and education. The hostilities in the region have resulted in the lack of qualified medical personnel and teachers. This has directly impacted the ability to fulfill those rights. In 2024, at least 183 medical units were damaged or destroyed as a result of attacks carried

11 Shoon Naing and Devjyot Ghoshal, “Who is Min Aung Hlaing, Myanmar’s junta chief facing ICC arrest warrant?” Reuters, November 27, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/myanmars-junta-chief-min-aung-hlaing-2024-11-27/>.

12 “Evidence of an escalation in brutal atrocities committed by Myanmar military – Myanmar Mechanism Annual Report,” Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, August 13, 2024, <https://iimm.un.org/en/evidence-escalation-brutal-atrocities-committed-myanmar-military-myanmar-mechanism-annual-report>.

13 Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, “Evidence of an escalation in brutal atrocities committed by Myanmar military – Myanmar Mechanism Annual Report.”

14 Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, “Evidence of an escalation in brutal atrocities committed by Myanmar military – Myanmar Mechanism Annual Report.”

15 Human Rights Council, Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar, (September 9 - October 9, 2024), A/HRC/56/57, 8, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-briefing-notes/2024/09/report-human-rights-situation-myanmar>.

16 A/HRC/56/57, 9, 12.

Police assault on protesters

Credit: Sithu Naina (VOA)



out by the military.<sup>17</sup> Another 73 were reported as occupied by military forces.<sup>18</sup> At least 168 health professionals were either killed, injured, arrested, or kidnapped during the same year.<sup>19</sup> For schools, reports showed that at least 239 incidents affected educational facilities, and at least 73 teachers were killed.<sup>20</sup>

The huge amount of violence in the country has affected social structures, norms, and values, ultimately increasing tensions. The continued exposure to violence has generated fear. This has had a devastating impact on the mental health and well-being of victims and communities in Myanmar. Expert studies suggest that around 60 percent of victims reported symptoms of depression and anxiety.<sup>21</sup> Myanmar currently does not have sufficient legal, institutional, and professional capacity to address mental health concerns rising in the country. In the absence of public or state healthcare services, civil society, and humanitarian organizations have helped address this situation.<sup>22</sup> They have provided qualified mental health assistance and education to protect citizens. They have also helped identify and refer cases requiring counseling or medical treatment. Civil society and humanitarian organizations have developed good practices within Myanmar and the region. The support includes psychiatric services, counseling services, group therapies, and online counseling.<sup>23</sup>

A big contributor to most of these violations remaining unpunished is the absence of the rule of law in Myanmar. The rule of law comprises law enforcement, the criminal justice system, and penal institutions. Even though the military has lost power as they have lost control over some regions, they still have some power by limiting the rule of law. The military has subjected more areas to martial law, which has led to the

restriction of fundamental freedoms, such as free speech and political opinion.<sup>24</sup> They have also performed arbitrary arrests and have prosecuted their opponents without due process of law.<sup>25</sup> Both of those actions constitute human rights violations under international law. The military has also amended the criminal code to broaden the types of crimes that result in penalties.<sup>26</sup> This weaponizes the criminal justice system against anyone perceived to be engaged in any form of political opposition. In 2024, at least 1,648 individuals were convicted for opposing military power.<sup>27</sup>

This situation is deeply concerning for the international community as a whole. The European Union and several countries, such as the USA, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, have expressed concern. On January 6, 2025, more than ten countries released a press statement on the situation.<sup>28</sup> In it, they highlighted that increased tension and acts of violence are considered unacceptable. They place a strong emphasis on the fact that humanitarian and international law is being violated by these acts.<sup>29</sup> In addition to highlighting all of the violations previously discussed, the spread of diseases and lack of medical facilities is also a deep concern for these countries.<sup>30</sup> The countries have recognized that women, children, and members of ethnic and minority populations are mostly at risk.<sup>31</sup> They need full, safe, and unimpeded humanitarian access to life-saving aid. They have also emphasized that addressing the underlying discrimination and brutal treatment is crucial to solving the politically rooted side of the conflict.<sup>32</sup> Additionally, they urged the implementation of UNSC resolution 2669/2022 which calls for a ceasefire and an end to all forms of violence in Myanmar.<sup>33</sup> This statement acts as a way of pressuring the involved actors to reach a

17 A/HRC/56/57, 10.

18 A/HRC/56/57, 10.

19 A/HRC/56/57, 10.

20 A/HRC/56/57, 10.

21 A/HRC/56/57, 57.

22 A/HRC/56/57, 57.

23 A/HRC/56/57, 57.

24 A/HRC/56/57, 21.

25 A/HRC/56/57, 21.

26 A/HRC/56/57, 21.

27 A/HRC/56/57, 24.

28 "Joint Press Statement on the Human Rights and Humanitarian Situation in Myanmar," Office of the Spokesperson, January 6, 2025, <https://www.state.gov/joint-press-statement-on-the-human-rights-and-humanitarian-situation-in-myanmar/>.

29 Office of the Spokesperson, "Joint Press Statement on the Human Rights and Humanitarian Situation in Myanmar."

30 Office of the Spokesperson, "Joint Press Statement on the Human Rights and Humanitarian Situation in Myanmar."

31 Office of the Spokesperson, "Joint Press Statement on the Human Rights and Humanitarian Situation in Myanmar."

32 Office of the Spokesperson, "Joint Press Statement on the Human Rights and Humanitarian Situation in Myanmar."

33 Office of the Spokesperson, "Joint Press Statement on the Human Rights and Humanitarian Situation in Myanmar."



ceasefire and stop human rights violations.

## Conclusion

The ongoing crisis in Myanmar has devastated the lives of many civilians. The constant use of landmines and cluster munitions, even when they are prohibited from use, shows the extreme violence that the country suffers from. Affected groups such as children, farmers, and displaced populations are at an even bigger risk of being attacked. Because of this, special and considerate actions to help this population shall be considered. International legislation that exists and needs to be put into practice such as the Ottawa Convention should be considered when addressing this issue.

The human rights situation in the country remains critical. Increasing numbers of children missing school, civilians not being able to get access to healthcare, and the grand amount of mental health issues this is bringing should be kept in mind. Because humanitarian aid is often inaccessible to victims, delegates should consider alternatives to ensure the protection of human rights. Until a peace agreement is established in the country, thousands of civilians are still at risk.

Human rights are inheritable for every person. Their protection should be of the utmost importance, even in times of crisis. The protection of human rights in the ongoing and aggravating war in Myanmar is something that delegates should keep in mind when addressing this issue.

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