

2026 Mid-South Model UN Conference



SOCHUM

Social, Cultural, and Humanitarian Committee

Chairs: Kosi Aneji and Mohammad Tanjimur Rahman

Introduction to the Committee

The United Nations Social, Cultural, and Humanitarian Council is the Third Committee of the General Assembly. Our important work focuses on examining human rights questions, including reports of the Human Rights Council.

SOCHUM was founded in 1945 to promote the principles established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Our work enforces and promotes the ideals of fundamental freedoms which ought to be enjoyed by the entirety of the international community. These include the right to life, the expression of cultures, the freedom of political participation, the protection of children's rights, and the promotion of social development, among many others. We seek to design peaceful settlements for these issues in the international community, initiating studies to encourage cooperation and popularizing freedom for all.

The Committee discusses questions relating to the advancement of women, the protection of children, indigenous issues, the treatment of refugees, the promotion of fundamental freedoms through the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, and the right to self-determination. The Committee also addresses important social development questions such as issues related to youth, family, ageing, persons with disabilities, crime prevention, criminal justice, and international drug control.

Topic A: Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking

1. History and Past UN Action

While traditional slavery is prohibited worldwide, modern forms of slavery continue to exist in many countries around the globe. Modern day slavery includes forced labor, forced marriage, sexual exploitation and debt bondage. With the evolution of these practices, the international community has attempted to create frameworks to deal with the problem.

The United Nations was the first international body to address the problem of slavery in the form of the Slavery Convention of 1926, which sought to suppress slavery and the slave trade. Later, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) declared that every individual had the right to freedom and protection from slavery.

One of the most modern significant initiatives is the Palermo Protocol (2000), which provides an international definition of human trafficking and facilitates international cooperation in preventing it, victim protection, and prosecuting offenders. The International Labor Organization (ILO) has strengthened global commitments through the 2014 Protocol to the Forced Labor Convention. Additionally, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, established in 2015, address the issue of modern slavery under Target 8.7, which calls for the elimination of forced labor and human trafficking.

		Forced labour sub-categories			Total forced labour	Forced marriage	Modern slavery	
		Forced labour exploitation	Forced sexual exploitation of adults and commercial sexual exploitation of children	State-imposed forced labour				
World	No. (thousands)	15 975	4 816	4 060	24 850	15 442	40 293	
	Prevalence (per thousand)	2.2	0.7	0.5	3.4	2.1	5.4	
Sex	Male	No. (thousands)	6 766	29	2 411	9 206	2 442	11 648
		Prevalence (per thousand)	1.8	0	0.6	2.4	0.6	3.0
	Female	No. (thousands)	9 209	4 787	1 650	15 646	13 000	28 645
		Prevalence (per thousand)	2.5	1.3	0.4	4.2	3.5	7.7
Age	Adults	No. (thousands)	12 995	3 791	3 778	20 564	9 762	30 327
		Prevalence (per thousand)	2.5	0.7	0.7	3.9	1.9	5.8
	Children	No. (thousands)	2 980	1 024	282	4 286	5 679	9 965
		Prevalence (per thousand)	1.3	0.4	0.1	1.9	2.5	4.4

Fig 1.0, ILO

2. Current Situation

Modern day slavery and human trafficking affect millions across the globe. The estimated number of individuals living under forced labor and forced marriage is around 50 million, according to recent estimates. This issue does not discriminate based on national boundaries and affects individuals of all age groups, but women, children, immigrants, and internally displaced individuals are more likely to become victims.

Trafficking organizations target individuals who are already disadvantaged, either due to poverty, war, or a lack of education and employment opportunities. The victims are forced into various industries, including agriculture, domestic work, construction, manufacturing, and commercial sex, and, in some cases, criminal activities or armed conflict.

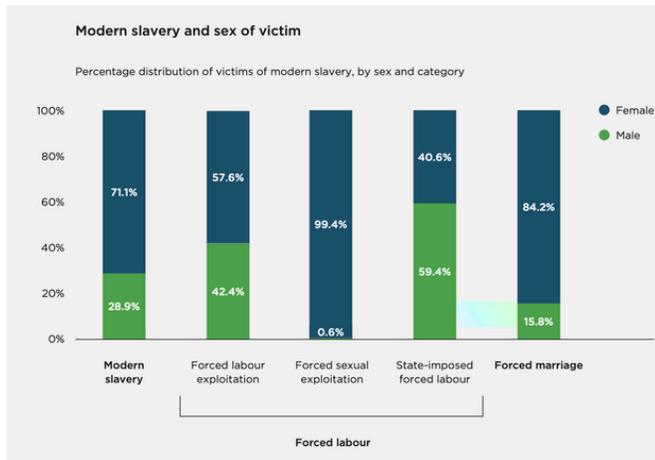


Fig 1.2, ILO

With advancements in technology, human trafficking organizations have become more efficient and have expanded their reach globally through various online platforms and social networks, making it a global violation. Even though many countries have enacted laws against human trafficking, they are not able to effectively counter this issue due to a lack of resources and internal corruption, and also because many victims are afraid of facing legal consequences themselves and hence do not come forward to seek help.

3. Problems a Resolution Should Address, & Possible Solutions

As the General Assembly's Third Committee, SOCHUM is responsible for addressing humanitarian and human rights concerns, making it a key forum for developing international responses to human trafficking.

The states involved are required to address the issues of combating the problem as well as protecting the victims, since there are instances where the victims are misunderstood to be perpetrators instead of those in need of assistance.

The offense is largely transnational in character, thereby requiring more cooperation from the governments, international bodies, and law enforcement agencies involved. The underlying factors to be considered by the delegates include poverty, gender, unemployment, and lack of educational opportunities. Possible solutions to the problem could involve the improvement of international cooperation, rehabilitation, legal assistance, more rigorous labor inspections, transparency in the supply chain, educational, and economic opportunities.

Some questions to consider:

1. How can international cooperation be strengthened to combat cross-border trafficking?
2. What policies can better protect trafficking victims and prevent their criminalization?
3. How can countries address the social and economic factors that increase vulnerability to trafficking?
4. What role should corporations and global supply chains play in preventing forced labor?
5. How can technology be used to detect and prevent trafficking networks?

4. Resources

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/>

International Labour Organization – Forced Labour

<https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang--en/index.htm>

Palermo Protocol Overview

<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro/UNTOC.html>

Global Slavery Index

<https://www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/>

Topic B: Sanctions/The Blocking of Humanitarian Aid

1. History and Past UN Action

Sanctions are a critical instrument employed by the U.N. Security Council in its efforts to counter terrorism, stem nuclear proliferation, and prevent or resolve armed conflicts. These sanctions are applied under Article 41 of the U.N. Charter, written in 1945. Article 25 of the U.N. Charter imposes a legal obligation on Member States to carry out decisions of the U.N. Security Council including Article 41. Two significant moments in scrutiny and change have fundamentally altered the design and approach to U.N. sanctions.

Between 1998 and 2002, in response to the devastating humanitarian impacts of comprehensive sanctions on the civilian populations of former Yugoslavia, Haiti, and Iraq, the U.N. altered their approach and design to their sanctions. Additionally, as sanction measures have become more individualized and discriminating, the procedures for listing and de-listing individuals came under scrutiny.

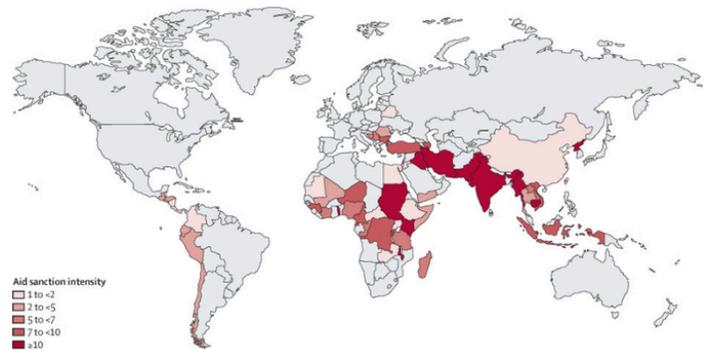


Figure 2 Global aid sanctions 1990-2019

Figure 1.

The U.N. discovered that targeted listings were negatively impacting individuals' and entities due processes rights. In recent years, the U.N. sanctions instrument has faced scrutiny regarding the current sanctions measures on the humanitarian sector's ability to consistently access and aid communities in need.

2. Current Situation

Over 305 million people currently suffer from famine, natural disasters, and conflicts worldwide. These people have an urgent and unprecedented need for humanitarian assistance. The ability to deliver effective aid to people suffering in territories controlled by countries or entities facing U.N. sanctions has been hindered by the de-risking practice financial institutions (FIs) have implemented that impedes the provision of financial services to humanitarian organizations and life saving aid.

Thematic SDN List Designations in 2023 and 2024

	2023	2024
Counterterrorism	250	326
Drug Trafficking	192	138
Nonproliferation	99	91
Human Rights and Corruption	78	57
Malicious Cyber Activities	24	41
Transnational Crime	13	10
Hostage Taking and Wrongful Detention	5	3
Election Interference	0	10

Chart: Center for a New American Security (CNAS) • Source: CNAS analysis, U.S. Department of the Treasury

Figure 3.

This resolution effectively establishes a humanitarian safeguard across all U.N. sanctions regimes, enabling humanitarian groups, actors, and donors to respond to needs and crises quickly and effectively. Though this resolution is an impressive achievement in human rights and has enable greater access to humanitarian aid in sanctioned countries, limits in access and aid persist as a result of the international community to confront structural issues. For example, issues such as overlapping sanctions, the effect on the private sector, and a lack of unified compliance framework sanctions impede the international community’s ability to achieve peace and humanitarian aid.

3. Problems a Resolution Should Address

Sanctions imposed by the U.N. impact all civilians of territories on sanctions lists. The unsequences of imposed sanctions limit citizens ability to experience human rights, impede development in many sectors, and exacerbate: the collapse of domestic economies, devaluation of currencies and hyperinflation.

Nonprofit Organizations (NPOs) and other humanitarian groups require funds to support their efforts, and had not been able to achieve their goals. Many of these groups faced impediments to their ability to pursue practical measures to secure and maintain access to people and populations in need and to carry out their services. This potentially resulted in adverse impacts on the scope, amount, and quality of humanitarian, medical, and other necessary services worldwide. On December 9, 2022, the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) passed UNSC Resolution 2664.

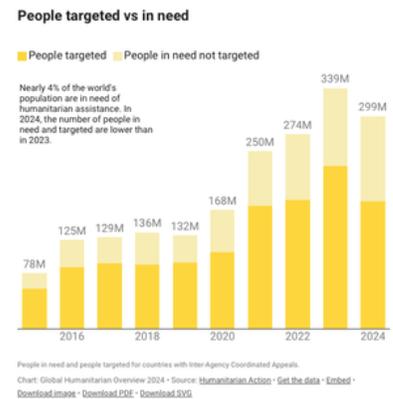


Figure 2

Some questions to consider:

1. What can SOCHUM do to further promote humanitarian support in the confines of the U.N. sanctions?
2. The EU and US were emboldened by resolution 2664 to redesign their approach to sanctions, increasing the reach of their humanitarian efforts. In what other ways can other countries increase the reach of their humanitarian efforts?
3. Many donors in the private sector have engaged in de-risking in light of sanctions which limits the available finances for humanitarian aid groups. What can be done to mitigate the consequences of sanctions on humanitarian aid?

Terms Defined:

- De-risking: when financial institutions terminate or restrict business relationships with clients or categories of clients to avoid risk.
- Unified Compliance Framework Sanction: a consolidated approach to managing legal and regulatory restrictions by mapping various international sanctions lists, requirements, and controls into a single framework.

4. Resources

https://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:7895/UNSHA_ScopingPaper_FINAL_WEB.pdf

<https://www.state.gov/de->

[risking#:~:text=De%2Drisking%20refers%20to%20the,%2C%20rather%20than%20manage%2C%20risk.](#)

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/safeguarding-humanitarian-action-united-states-critical-role-renewing-un-security-council>

<https://hls.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Res.-2664-and-Counterterrorism-Measures.pdf>

<https://www.stimson.org/2025/the-limits-of-un-security-council-resolution-2664/>

<https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/sres2664-2022>

Note to the Delegates

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2026 Mid South Model United Nations Conference (MSMUN) and to the Social, Cultural, and Humanitarian Committee (SOCHUM). My name is Mohammad Tanjimur Rahman, and I will be one of your 2026 SOCHUM chairs. I am a freshman planning to major in Data Analytics with Psychology.

My name is Kosi Aneji and I will also be chairing SOCHUM 2026 with me. I am a sophomore planning to double major in Biology and Environmental Science.

We are both very excited to chair the SOCHUM committee this year! The 2025 Agenda of the Human Rights Council encourages us to revisit and improve past resolutions to better respect the value of human life in the international community. The topics we will discuss this year are modern day slavery, human trafficking and sanctions and blocking of humanitarian aid. Both topics have a significant impact on the human rights of individuals in the international community.

We look forward to meeting all of you at the conference and hope that these issues will inspire debate and cooperation. Please do not hesitate to email either of us should you have any questions!

Regards,
Kosi Aneji
Mohammad Tanjimur Rahman (Tanji)

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List of Countries

Bangladesh – Faces serious issues involving human trafficking because of poverty and large labor migration; at the same time, it is also working towards strengthening labor laws and regulations within its borders.

Brazil – Faced issues involving forced labor in agriculture and other rural sectors; at the same time, it is also working towards strengthening labor inspections and regional cooperation.

Central African Republic - Many of the sanctions in this country were enacted by the UN Security Council to target armed groups and entities threatening peace. Humanitarian aid is not able to effectively reach the all individuals in need.

China – Faces international scrutiny over human rights issues involving forced labor and human trafficking; at the same time, it also focuses on its development strategies and government regulation.

Democratic Republic of Congo - The sanctions placed on this nation by the United Nations Security Council target armed groups and entities violating humanitarian aid. Effective aid is unable to reach all individuals in need in this nation.

Germany – Strongly advocates for human rights protection; it especially focuses on migrant workers and international cooperation against human trafficking.

India – Continues to struggle with serious issues involving forced labor, child labor, and human trafficking because of economic inequality and large population size; at the same time, it is also working towards strengthening human rights within its borders.

Iran - The sanctions imposed on this nation by the United Nations conflate with other sanctions imposed by nations such as the United States. Iran severely complicate the ability to deliver humanitarian aid through unsafe environments, unstable finances, access to resources, etc. This greatly hinders humanitarian aid

Libya - The United Nations recently updated the sanctions on the nation of Libya until May of 2026. Humanitarian needs remain critical for a significant proportion of the population.

Mali - Humanitarian aid in the nation of Mali is hindered by the sanction imposed by the United Nations with the intent to promote peace within the region.

Mexico – Serves as a source as well as a transit state for human trafficking; here, organized crime plays a significant role in human trafficking.

Nigeria – Faces a high incidence of international human trafficking, especially involving women and children; it is working towards strengthening anti-trafficking efforts with international cooperation.

Philippines – Focuses on strengthening human rights protection for overseas workers because it hosts a large number of migrant laborers within its territory.

Somalia - The sanctions active in this nation primary target the entity Al-Shabaab. Many of the territories controlled by Al-Shabaab create an unsafe environment for humanitarian groups who are unable to protect the human rights of individuals in these territories.

Sudan - Though the crisis in Sudan is critical and populations in this nation are in dire need of humanitarian aid, the aid is hindered by the RSF, SRF, and bureaucratic delays that result from sanctions imposed by the United Nations that were recently extended to October 2026.

Yemen - The United Nations recently extended sanctions on entities in this region. Many of the sanctioned entities and groups opposing peace in this nation target humanitarian aid groups, hindering their ability to promote human rights.