

# Hilton 2022 Chair Letter

UNODC — United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

## *Committee Overview*

*Prison Torture in Syria*

*Political Corruption in Latin America (as a result of the Lava Jato Scandal)*

*Codeine use in South Africa*

*Anti-Doping Regulations in the Olympics*

### **Committee Description:**

UNODC will be run Harvard Style, meaning that resolutions are not to be written until the date of the conference itself. Any delegates found to be possessing resolutions written beforehand will not be considered for an award and the resolution will not be accepted. Additionally, it is highly suggested that every delegate write at least one position paper on a topic, as doing so will be necessary to be considered for an award. Position papers should be turned in at the beginning of the conference or electronically to either chair by Friday at midnight.

All delegates are expected to come to the first day of the conference with a working knowledge of all or most of the topics as well as the policies of the countries that they represent.

### **ABOUT US:**

Hello delegates! My name is Joshua Jin. I am a senior at Sutherland High School and this is my fourth year in Model UN (but my first time chairing). Outside of MUN, I am the principal violist of the Rochester Philharmonic Youth Orchestra, a Life Scout working on Eagle, and the co-creator of the Pittsford Boy's Volleyball team. Feel free to email me if you have any questions, and I look forward to seeing you all in committee!

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My name is Bea Reichman and I am a senior at Penfield Highschool. I have been participating in Model UN for four years, I am the president of Penfield Model UN, and this is my second time chairing. When I'm not MUNing (is that a real verb...?) I run cross country and track. You might also catch me at local climate rallies and protests with New York Youth Climate Leaders. I am so excited for a fun and productive Hilton 2022 in UNODC! Feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns, I look forward to seeing you in November.

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## **Prison Torture in Syria**

In a war torn country dominated by the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party's dictatorial regime, civilians and non-violent protestors in Syria are being slaughtered by the thousands in prisons across the country. Under the leadership of Bashar al-Assad, unimaginable war crimes in Syrian prisons have left 13,000 people dead and over 75,000 people missing. Most UN diplomats see prison reforms as necessary to protect Syrian dissenters, non-violent protests, and civilians. The Syrian prison crisis is worsening amidst a rise in food insecurity, with upwards of 3 million Syrian civilians living food insecure.

Often referred to as "torture chambers", Syrian prisons are some of the deadliest and most traumatizing in the world. Government officials work to systematically deprive detainees of food, water, and medical care. Detainees are slaughtered by the thousands with public mass hangings and isolated forms of incomprehensible torture. The recent uptick in war crimes in Syrian prisons came after March 2011 as a way to crush opposition following a series of peaceful protests demanding the release of detainees.

With the world watching, United States and European Union sanctions have restricted Syrian banking and finance, crippling the Syrian government as food insecurity skyrockets. Many democratic nations have voiced anger and concern over a lack of global plan to address the crisis

as Syrian war crimes grow increasingly more severe. On March 30, 2022, the Syrian government enacted the “Anti-Torture Law”, mandating prison sentences for officials convicted of war crimes. These sentences range from 3 years (for minor charges) to the death penalty (for murder or rape). Critics of the law doubt it will be enforced, given Syria’s human rights record. Few nations expect any dramatic changes in the coming months.

In Syria, loved ones might never return home from prison. Syrians are demanding to know the truth. At a United Nations press conference in 2020, Syrian human rights advocate, Noura Ghazi, pushes for accountability in a statement: “We want our loved ones, we want justice, and the beginning of knowing the truth will lead us to it.” The UNODC must act quickly to protect Syrian civilians, dissenters, protestors, and prisoners of war before any more damage can be done.

Sources:

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<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2016/08/syria-torture-prisons/>  
<https://press.un.org/en/2020/sc14215.doc.htm>

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-un/syria-a-torture-chamber-u-n-says-in-call-to-free-detainees-idUSKBN16L0SF>

### **Political Corruption in Latin America (as a result of the Lava Jato Scandal)**

How did an internal investigation into political corruption turn into a global crisis? Brazil’s infamous Lava Jato (car wash) scandal shook the western hemisphere in 2014. The scandal began with an internal investigation in Brazil. Investigators claimed that Petrobras, a Brazilian state oil company, accepted bribes from construction firms for contracts at inflated prices. The Brazilian Worker’s Party allegedly assisted in funneling some of those funds in order to buy votes for their party. Brazilian President at the time (Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva) was accused of helping Petrobras with the inflated contracts in exchange for a beachfront apartment from OAS (a state engineering firm). President Lula was sentenced to twelve years in prison as a result of the investigation, and he claimed Lava Jato was a plot to prevent him from running for office.

The complex investigation quickly spread beyond Brazil. Soon, dozens of politicians, CEO's, and powerful leaders in South American nations were accused of political corruption. European nations pounced to extradite leaders as the Lava Jato scandal created a worldwide crisis.

The CEO of the Mexican state-owned oil company, Pemex, was extradited from Spain. Two presidents in Panama were charged with corruption/bribery related crimes. The Vice President of Ecuador was sent to prison, while the President was extradited from Belgium. In Peru, five presidents were investigated or detained, and one died by suicide while dodging investigations. Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela. Almost every Latin American country has been affected.

While the Lava Jato scandal may have occurred over 8 years ago, the effects are still incredibly present today. Many Latin American governments are in shambles, distrust in Brazil's governmental structures has led to social unrest, and the crisis begs an ethical question: what is the United Nations' role in a country's personal politics? Is it the UNODC's job to actively fight against corruption? When referring to the Lava Jato scandal in the UN's position on fighting global corruption, the UN advocates for "compliance, transparency, oversight and accountability". A crisis like Lava Jato requires diplomatic discussion to find a solution.

Sources:

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<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-35810578>

[https://ungass2021.unodc.org/uploads/ungass2021/documents/session1/contributions/UN\\_Comm\\_on\\_Position\\_to\\_Address\\_Global\\_Corruption\\_Towards\\_UNGASS2021.pdf](https://ungass2021.unodc.org/uploads/ungass2021/documents/session1/contributions/UN_Comm_on_Position_to_Address_Global_Corruption_Towards_UNGASS2021.pdf)

### **Codeine use in South Africa**

Drug abuse is widespread in South Africa. Over 15% of the population suffers from substance abuse problems according to 2016 statistics. This number is only getting higher, as substance abuse is on the rise in South Africa. Although cannabis and heroin are the most abused drugs in South Africa, a new over-the-counter drug is quickly catching up to that title.

Codeine, found naturally in the sap of opium poppies, is a highly addictive and potentially fatal pain-relieving drug. South Africa is currently in the midst of a codeine crisis. Only 35% of prescribing medical professionals stated that codeine abuse and addiction could be properly managed in general practice settings, and the fear is not unfounded as 40% of pharmacies in South Africa have said patients' requests for prescribed medicines containing codeine are increasing. Codeine is becoming, if it is not already, the most abused over-the-counter drug in South Africa.

Adolescents and young adults are the most abundant substance abusers in South Africa. According to Syphokaze Dada, a member of the South African Medical Research Council, "Teenagers are not even aware of the consequences of using codeine." It is also very obtainable, as it is still an over-the-counter drug. This combination of availability and poor education equate to a devastating codeine crisis amongst adolescents and young adults.

*Should the problem be attacked from the root, that being underqualified pharmacies and corrupt medical professionals? Or should the solution be focused on rehabilitation and education?*

Sources:

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## Anti-Doping Regulations in the Olympics

While doping is believed to be a modern phenomenon, its use dates back to the third century BC. Ancient Greek athletes would often use various concoctions of alcohol, hallucogenic mushrooms and sesame seeds to improve performance. Today, such athletes are harshly punished for this behavior, but minors may get off easier.

World Anti-Doping Agency Code, Article 10.6.1.3-” Protected Persons or Recreational Athletes Where the anti-doping rule violation not involving a Substance of Abuse is committed by a Protected Person or Recreational Athlete, and the Protected Person or Recreational Athlete can establish No Significant Fault or Negligence, then the period of Ineligibility shall be, at a minimum, a reprimand and no period of Ineligibility, and at a maximum, two (2) years Ineligibility, depending on the Protected Person or Recreational Athlete’s degree of Fault.”

This is a clause in the WADA code, used in the Olympics. The “Protected Persons” mentioned are any athletes that are considered minors. Mandatory public disclosure is not required when a protected person commits an anti-doping rule violation under WADA, but it does not go so far as to prohibit media reporting on the athlete. Overall, what the rules will look like in practice are unclear. Regardless, this rule makes using skaters under the age of 16 highly advantageous to countries such as Russia, which has a history of state-sponsored doping.

*How should the Model UN Deal with this problematic rule to avoid widespread doping among young athletes?*

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<https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/olympics/2019/11/05/iocs-large-role-in-anti-doping-creates-conflict-of-interest/40551769/>

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