



United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

*A. State Responses to Militarized Organized
Crime: Security, Rule of Law, and Human
Rights.*

*B. Use of Estate forces as private paramilitary
forces to ensure and enforce national security*



CSJBMUN II



Background guide

COLEGIO SAN JOSE DE BARRANQUILLA
MODEL OF UNITED NATIONS 2026



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CHAIR PRESIDENT(DAIS) PRESENTATION LETTER

Samuel Gil

Honorable delegates, welcome to this Model of United Nations of Colegio San Jose Barranquilla 2026, I am pleased to receive you as your committee president in UNODC. It's a pleasure for me, Samuel Gil, from CSJB, to represent this committee and guide you through the process. As we will lead this committee, we are open to any question you have about procedures, the topic or anything you doubt; be totally free to ask. As president it is my goal to make this debate go on working as a challenge and a useful experience in your academic process. In this guide we developed for you, you will find all the information required for you to prepare for the model. You will be able to be in contact with me through the information located at the end of the document. I hope you enjoy this experience, Samuel David Gil Jimenez -UNODC President.

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CHAIR VICEPRESIDENT (DAIS) PRESENTATION LETTER

Henri Paul Lacoutre

Good morning, honorable delegates. My name is Henri Lecoultré, and I am honored to serve as one of your Presidents in the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) committee for the Second Model United Nations of Colegio San José. As an ex-student of this institution and a long-time MUN delegate and president, I have experienced firsthand the academic and personal value of Model United Nations. It is my goal to ensure that this committee provides a challenging, respectful, and enriching environment for all delegates. The UNODC committee will address complex global issues such as transnational crime, drug trafficking, and corruption. We expect delegates to arrive prepared, engage in constructive debate, and uphold diplomatic conduct throughout the conference. We look forward to your participation and wish you success in your preparation. Henri Lecoultré - UNODC President.

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2. INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

2.1. Committee history

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) was established in 1997 through the merger of the United Nations Drug Control Programme and the Centre for International Crime Prevention. This consolidation reflected the growing recognition within the United Nations that issues such as illicit drug trafficking, organized crime, corruption, and weak criminal justice systems are deeply interconnected and cannot be addressed in isolation. The creation of UNODC marked a shift toward a more comprehensive and specialized approach to transnational crime, emphasizing coordination, prevention, and institutional strengthening.

Headquartered in Vienna, UNODC operates as the UN's leading entity in supporting Member States in strengthening the rule of law and addressing complex criminal networks that transcend national borders. Its work is rooted in the understanding that transnational crime undermines governance, fuels violence, and obstructs sustainable development, particularly in vulnerable regions. As such, UNODC collaborates closely with governments, regional organizations, civil society, and other UN bodies to design and implement strategies that respond to these challenges in a coordinated manner.

Over the years, UNODC has played a key role in the development and promotion of major international legal frameworks, most notably the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). These instruments have become foundational pillars in global efforts to combat organized crime and corruption, providing Member States with legal standards and mechanisms for cooperation. Additionally, UNODC has contributed to global initiatives against human trafficking, drug abuse prevention, terrorism financing, and cybercrime, expanding its scope in response to evolving global threats.

UNODC's impact extends beyond policy into practical implementation. Through technical assistance, training programs, and capacity-building initiatives, it has supported countries in reforming judicial systems, improving law enforcement practices, and enhancing cross-border cooperation. Its data collection and research functions also provide critical insights into global crime trends, enabling evidence-based policymaking. By bridging the gap between international norms and national implementation, UNODC continues to play a central role in promoting justice, security, and international cooperation.

2.2. Committee's objective and mission

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is fundamentally a policy-driven and cooperation-oriented body, focused on strengthening legal frameworks and institutional capacities rather than engaging in enforcement or military action. Its primary mission is to support the implementation of key international conventions, including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption, through research, technical assistance, and capacity-building initiatives. Within this context, UNODC promotes a rule-of-law approach that emphasizes prevention, accountability, and international collaboration.

In the Model United Nations setting, this committee serves as a forum for evidence-based debate on issues related to crime prevention, justice systems, and transnational cooperation. Delegates are expected to approach discussions from a legal, institutional, and policy-oriented perspective, proposing solutions that strengthen governance, enhance judicial effectiveness, and promote international coordination. The focus lies on designing frameworks, agreements, and strategies that Member States can realistically implement within their legal and political contexts.

It is important to highlight that UNODC does not operate as a military or enforcement body. Therefore, delegates are not expected to propose direct military interventions, coercive actions, or operational law enforcement measures. Instead, acceptable proposals include legal reforms, international agreements, monitoring mechanisms, capacity-building programs, funding initiatives, and cooperative strategies between states and institutions. This ensures that the committee remains aligned with its real-world mandate and emphasizes sustainable, long-term solutions.

Ultimately, the objective of this committee is to foster collaborative and realistic approaches to global crime challenges, encouraging delegates to balance national interests with collective responsibility. By focusing on policy innovation, legal development, and institutional strengthening, UNODC provides a platform for meaningful dialogue that reflects the complexities of modern transnational crime and the necessity of coordinated global responses.

3. INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPICS.

3.1. Topics

A. State Responses to Militarized Organized Crime: Security, Rule of Law, and Human Rights

As militarization of transnational criminal organizations presents a complex challenge for nations as criminal groups in some regions possess military-grade weapons, hierarchical command structures, and the capacity to confront state authorities directly. As a response, states have developed different strategies, treaties, deployment of armed forces, expanded police powers, and emergency security measures, which in a short term helps by regulating diverse situations that can risk the country, but they raise important concerns regarding the rule of law, institutional integrity, and the protection of human rights.

From a UNODC perspective, this topic examines how states can respond effectively to militarized criminal organizations without undermining civilian institutions or violating international legal standards. The use of military forces in internal security operations often blurs the distinction between law enforcement and armed conflict, increasing the risk of excessive use of force, arbitrary detention, and erosion of judicial oversight. At the same time, many states argue that heavily armed criminal groups exceed the capacity of traditional policing, necessitating extraordinary measures.

This topic encourages delegates to evaluate the long-term consequences of security-centered responses, including the potential normalization of militarization, weakening of judicial systems, and loss of public trust. It should emphasize the need for accountability mechanisms focused in the professionalized law enforcement. Ultimately, debate within this topic focuses on identifying responses that restore public security while reinforcing the rule of law and upholding human rights, in line with UNODC's mandate and international legal frameworks.

B. Use of Estate forces as private paramilitary forces to ensure and enforce national security

In response to rising threats from organized crime, terrorism, and internal instability, some states have increasingly relied on security forces to perform roles resembling those of paramilitary actors. This often involves the expanded deployment of armed forces or heavily militarized units in internal security operations, sometimes with broad mandates and limited civilian oversight. While such measures are commonly justified as necessary to protect national security, they raise significant legal, institutional, and human rights concerns.

From a governance perspective, the use of state forces in paramilitary roles can blur the distinction between civilian law enforcement and military operations. Armed forces are generally trained for combat rather than policing civilian populations, and their domestic deployment without clear legal frameworks, rules of engagement, or accountability mechanisms increases the risk of excessive use of force, arbitrary detention, and violations of due process. These practices can undermine judicial authority and erode public trust in state institutions.

Within the UNODC framework, this topic examines how states can ensure national security without transforming security forces into unaccountable paramilitary structures. Delegates are encouraged to assess the legal limits of force, the importance of civilian oversight, and the long-term implications for the rule of law, human rights, and institutional integrity, particularly when exceptional security measures become prolonged or normalized.

3.2. Context.

During the cold war, vast quantities of small arms and light weapons were produced and stockpiled by both sides. After the conflict ended, they were disarmed and spread into nonstate related actors, which mostly included criminal organizations. Furthermore, these groups gain power in in base of the military armament and due to weakened security forces caused by the political instability mostly between European, Asian and American nations. Economic crevasses were filled up by an increase in the drug market as a result of international focus in the ideological conflict around the late 1980's and 1990's.

When a "kind of stability" could be reached after multiple treaties and meetings between Soviet and American representatives, crime organizations were already established and got control over drugs market, human

trafficking and migrant smuggling, money laundering, armed conflicts and transitional terrorism. Upon this, the military power held by these groups began to impose in the national economies, politics and society. At this point, a militarization by criminal organizations occurs and the governments start depending on a peaceful relation with them for a political stability or even ally with those groups to sustain the country and obtain an extra benefit, in most cases, an economic, political or military one.

In terms of governance, the presence of heavily armed criminal groups erodes state authority and weakens public institutions. Through corruption, intimidation, and violence, these organizations infiltrate police forces, judicial systems, and local governments, compromising the state's ability to enforce laws impartially. This deterioration of governance causes a decrease in public trust, reduces institutional legitimacy, and limits the effectiveness of democratic and legal processes, particularly in states with already fragile institutions. The issue now intersects with development, governance, and security concerns, requiring coordinated international cooperation, legal frameworks, and institutional strengthening. Within this context, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime plays a central role in supporting Member States to address the causes and consequences of militarized organized crime through evidence-based policies that prioritize justice, accountability, and the protection of human rights.

3.3. Current Challenges and Emerging Trends

In recent years, the evolution of organized crime has significantly increased the complexity of state responses. Criminal organizations are no longer limited to traditional illicit activities; they have diversified into cybercrime, digital financial systems, and transnational networks that operate across multiple jurisdictions simultaneously. This transformation has allowed them to bypass traditional law enforcement mechanisms, exploit legal loopholes, and expand their influence in both physical and digital domains. As a result, states face increasing difficulty in adapting their legal frameworks and institutional capacities to respond effectively.

Additionally, the growing access to advanced technologies has strengthened the operational capabilities of these groups. The use of encrypted communication, surveillance tools, drones, and sophisticated financial systems has elevated their ability to coordinate operations and evade detection. This technological shift creates an imbalance between state institutions—particularly in developing countries—and criminal organizations, further reinforcing the trend toward militarized responses. However, such responses often fail to address the root causes of organized crime, including inequality, weak governance, and lack of institutional trust.

Another pressing challenge lies in the transnational nature of these threats. Organized crime networks frequently operate across borders, taking advantage of inconsistent legal systems and limited international cooperation. This fragmentation reduces the effectiveness of national strategies and highlights the need for coordinated global responses. Within this context, UNODC emphasizes the importance of strengthening international legal cooperation, harmonizing legislation, and improving intelligence-sharing mechanisms to counter these evolving threats without compromising human rights and the rule of law.

3.4 International Response and Policy Approaches

The international community has increasingly recognized that addressing militarized organized crime requires a multidimensional approach that goes beyond security measures. Global efforts have focused on strengthening legal frameworks, promoting institutional reforms, and enhancing cooperation between states. Instruments such as international conventions, regional agreements, and joint task forces have been developed to facilitate information exchange, extradition processes, and coordinated law enforcement actions. These mechanisms aim to reduce safe havens for criminal organizations and improve the overall effectiveness of global responses.

At the same time, there has been a growing emphasis on prevention strategies. Rather than relying solely on reactive measures, many states and international organizations are investing in programs that address the socio-economic conditions that enable organized crime to thrive. These include initiatives focused on education, employment opportunities, community resilience, and anti-corruption measures. By targeting the structural drivers of crime, such approaches seek to create sustainable solutions that reduce the long-term reliance on militarized responses.

Within the UNODC framework, policy recommendations prioritize strengthening judicial independence, improving law enforcement training, and ensuring the proportional use of force. Special attention is given to accountability mechanisms, including oversight bodies, transparency initiatives, and human rights monitoring systems. These tools are essential to prevent abuses of power and maintain public trust in state institutions. Ultimately, the international response aims to strike a balance between ensuring security and preserving democratic principles, reinforcing the idea that effective crime prevention must be rooted in the rule of law and respect for human rights.

3.5 Key Concepts

- **Proliferation:** The spread of weapons, military equipment, or security capabilities— particularly small arms and light weapons—from legal or illegal sources to new actors, including non-state groups.
- **Rule of Law:** The principle that all individuals and institutions, including the state, are subject to laws that are publicly established, equally enforced, and independently adjudicated in accordance with human rights standards.
- **Militarization:** The process by which actors or institutions adopt military structures, tactics, or reliance on force, often prioritizing security solutions over civilian or legal approaches.
- **Civilian Law Enforcement:** State institutions responsible for maintaining public order and enforcing laws through civilian policing methods, operating under judicial oversight and legal accountability.
- **Facto Militarization:** The practical adoption of military roles, tactics, and force in civilian security operations without a formal legal declaration or institutional mandate.
- **Rules of Engagement:** Official directives that regulate when and how security forces may use force, ensuring actions are lawful, proportional, and aimed at protecting civilians and upholding accountability.
- **Accountability:** The principle that security forces and state institutions are legally and institutionally responsible for their actions, meaning their conduct can be reviewed, investigated, and sanctioned if it violates the law or human rights.

4. GUIDING QUESTIONS

A. State Responses to Militarized Organized Crime: Security, Rule of Law, and Human Rights:

1. When does organized crime pose a threat severe enough to justify extraordinary security measures?
2. How militarization creates a tension between the security and the rule of law?
3. What legal frameworks should govern state responses to militarized crime?
4. How can states respond forcefully without undermining the rule of law?
5. Should human rights obligations ever be temporarily restricted in security emergencies?
6. What accountability mechanisms are necessary when security forces operate domestically?
7. How can international cooperation respect sovereignty while addressing transnational threats?
8. What agreements or arrangements can be proposed for the issue to find a point in which citizen welfare and political stability can be held in the long term?

B. Use of State forces as private paramilitary forces to ensure and enforce national security

1. Under what conditions should armed forces be deployed for internal security?
2. How can states define clear boundaries between military and police responsibilities?
3. What distinguishes legitimate internal security operations from de facto militarization?
4. Who should oversee the actions of security forces during internal operations?
5. What challenges arise when emergency security measures become permanent?
6. How can states transition from militarized responses back to civilian law enforcement?
7. What role can UNODC play in post-security institutional reform?
8. How can states rebuild judicial capacity after prolonged security operations?

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