

UNHRC BACKGROUND GUIDE

AMSIMUN '26

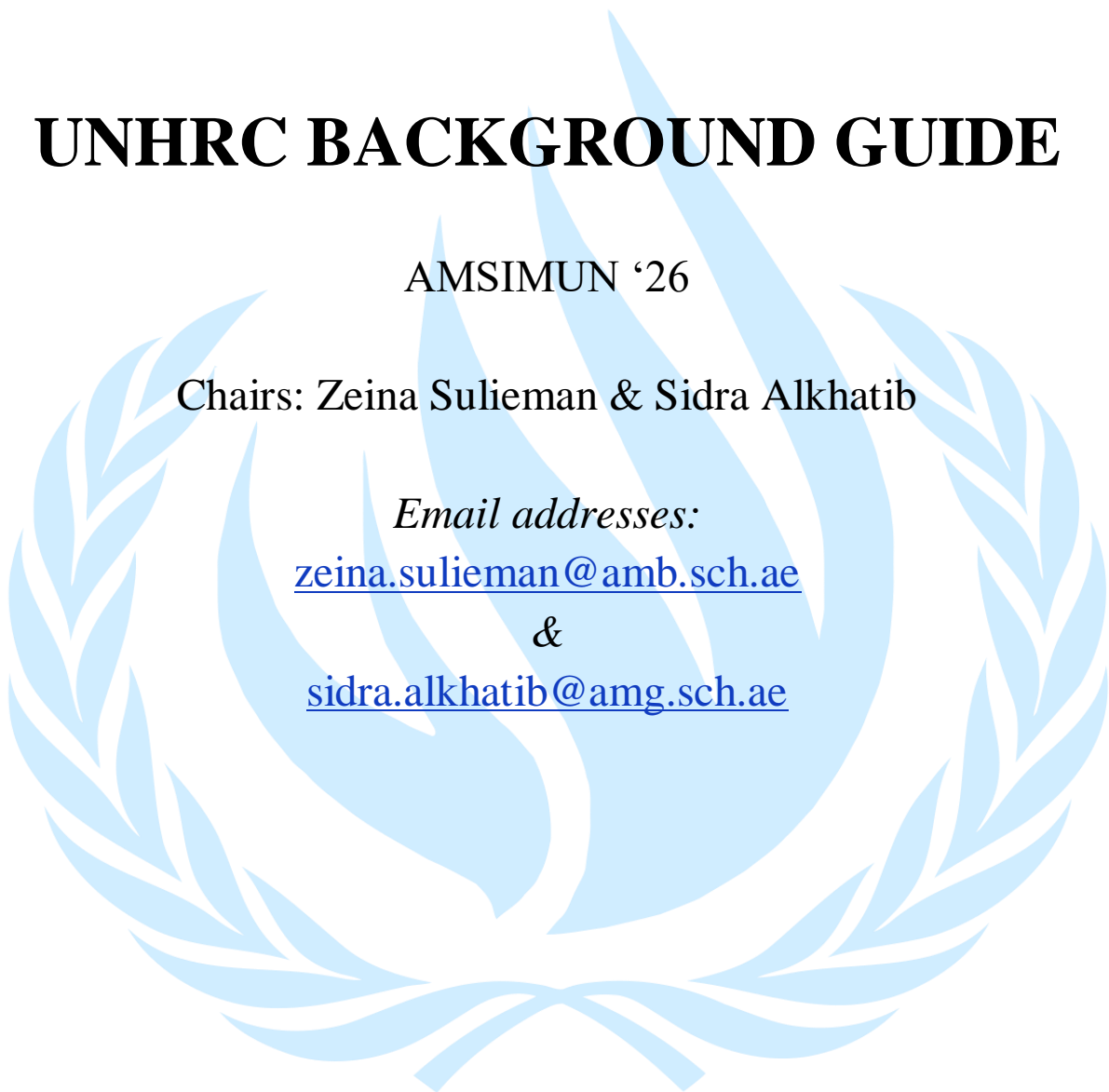
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Dear Delegates,

We are immensely proud to welcome you to the annual AMSI Model United Nations 2026 conference as the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) chairs! We are both deeply honored to chair UNHRC as our MUN journey comes to an end. Let us make this conference the last most memorable one. Therefore, we sincerely long for your dedication to reach a logical resolution.

Established in 2006 by the General Assembly, the United Nations Human Rights Council took upon the mission to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights around the world. Additionally, it serves as a platform for international dialogue and cooperation. The UNHRC has implemented numerous initiatives and endorsed a range of regulations aimed at securing human rights. These efforts are designed to significantly improve the lives of every human being around the world.

This background guide serves as a start point for your research and can not be your sole research. As your chairs, we advise you to begin researching prior to the conference. It is essential to research on the general topic, your country's stance and view point, your country's relation to the topic, and other countries stance. This background guide is simply an outline of the whole topic, whose purpose is to give you a rough idea and good background before you start in-depth analysis.

We're truly thrilled to embark on this experience alongside all of you! By taking part in this year's conference, you're stepping into a rewarding opportunity to learn and grow.

As your chairs, we plan to ensure that every voice is heard and every committee is unbiased throughout the entirety of this conference. Lastly, we look forward to seeing you all this May, proudly representing this committee, UNHRC! Please do not forget to send us your **position papers** only through **Mawakeb Mail**, and do not hesitate to ask us any questions!

Your chairs,

Zeina Sulieman and Sidra Alkhatib.

Topic: Assessing Human Rights Abuses at the US-Mexican Border and Promoting Accountability.

The US-Mexico border is one of the most closely monitored migration corridors in the world. Each year, thousands of people cross or attempt to cross this border seeking safety, opportunity, or family reunification. Yet, these attempts have shown to lead to a large-scale of human rights abuses. Since the Mexican-American War, the boundary was a critical place for crime, drug trafficking, human smuggling, and inhumane treatment. Today, the UNHRC committee has taken on the important task of identifying solutions to ensure the safety of migrants worldwide. While both the US and Mexico have taken safety measures and implemented laws to enhance security, accountability still needs to be strengthened through improved oversight and international cooperation. The defiance of human rights at the US-Mexico border, a longstanding issue, must be brought to an immediate discussion in the hopes of finding an attainable solution to end the deprivation of rights of innocent migrants.

History:

The United States and Mexican border is over 3,145 kilometers long, and it has been shared and pushed back for many years. The origins of the modern border trace back to the early 19th century, when Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821 and controlled many northern territories. Tension started to increase after the Texas Revolution in 1836 and worsened when the United States took over Texas in 1845 and adopted the Rio Grande as its southern border even when Mexico opposed it.

This conflict led to the Mexican–American War, which ended on February 2, 1848, with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Under this treaty, Mexico surrendered approximately 55% of its territory to the United States, including present-day California, Nevada, Utah, and parts of several other states. The treaty also established the Rio Grande as the official border and granted citizenship to Mexicans living in the given territories, which permanently shaped the modern border (National Archives, 2022).

The border was later finalized through additional agreements, including the Gadsden Purchase of 1853, which completed the modern continental boundary between the two nations as part of U.S. territorial expansion.

Mexican immigration started to increase significantly during the early 20th century due to the major economic opportunities in the United States and the instability in Mexico. Between 1910 and 1930, the Mexican immigrant population recorded in the United States tripled, with El Paso, Texas serving as a major entry point and symbol of migration for Mexican communities.

Border enforcement expanded with the creation of the United States Border Patrol on May 28, 1924, through the Labor Appropriation Act. Initially consisting of 450 officers, the agency was responsible for preventing illegal immigration and smuggling, transforming the border into an actively enforced boundary (U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 2020).

During the Great Depression, repatriation campaigns between 1929 and 1939 resulted in the removal of hundreds of thousands to millions of people of Mexican descent, including many United States citizens. These deportations were carried out through raids and government pressure, causing widespread family separation and long-term effects on Mexican communities (USCIS, 2020).

Immigration policies further changed with the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which imposed numerical limits on immigration from Mexico. These restrictions reduced legal migration opportunities and contributed to an increase in undocumented immigration and deportations, shaping migration patterns and enforcement along the border for decades (Immigration Act, 2019).

Analysis:

The United States–Mexico border has become one of the most controversial migration zones in the world, as increased enforcement and restrictive immigration policies have raised serious human rights concerns. While border enforcement was initially created to regulate migration and protect national security, its expansion over time has led to the widespread use of detention, deportation, and surveillance. These measures have placed migrants, including asylum seekers and families, in vulnerable situations where their rights may not always be fully protected.

One major concern is the treatment of migrants in detention facilities. Overcrowding, lack of access to adequate medical care, and prolonged detention periods have been widely criticized for their impact on migrants' physical and mental well-being. Many migrants are held for extended periods while their legal status is processed, which can create uncertainty, stress, and long-term psychological effects. These conditions have raised questions about whether detention practices align with international human rights standards.

Another key issue is the challenge of accountability. Border enforcement agencies are responsible for managing migration, but concerns have been raised regarding transparency and oversight. Because border enforcement operates under national authority, holding officials accountable for misconduct can be difficult, particularly when investigations are conducted internally. This has created ongoing debate about the balance between national sovereignty and the responsibility to uphold human rights.

Additionally, immigration restrictions have limited legal pathways for migrants, increasing the number of undocumented crossings. When legal entry becomes more restricted while migration pressures remain high, migrants may turn to unsafe or irregular routes. This increases their vulnerability to exploitation, detention, and deportation. As a result, the border has become not only a political boundary but also a humanitarian concern.

Overall, the situation at the United States–Mexico border reflects a complex conflict between border security and human rights protection. While governments have the right to control their borders, they also have the responsibility to ensure that enforcement policies respect the dignity, safety, and legal rights of migrants. This ongoing challenge continues to shape international debate on migration and accountability.

Questions to be answered in your resolution:

- How can migrants, asylum seekers, and border communities be provided with adequate support and protection to prevent human rights violations?
- What international or regional frameworks can be strengthened or established to address human rights abuses related to border enforcement and migration?
- How have human rights abuses at the US-Mexican border influenced national laws and policies on immigration and border security?
- What policies or legislative measures can be implemented to ensure accountability and prevent future human rights violations at the border?
- How can the safety of migrants and asylum seekers be strengthened throughout border and immigration processes?
- What obstacles hinder the protection of human rights at the border, and how can these barriers be effectively addressed or eliminated?

Starter Resources:

1. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/05/mexico-abuses-against-asylum-seekers-us-border>
2. <https://reliefweb.int/report/united-states-america/abuses-us-mexico-border-how-address-failures-and-protect-rights>
3. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/12/05/us-agents-block-mistreat-mexican-asylum-seekers>
4. <https://www.wola.org/analysis/introduction-accountability-for-abuses-at-the-u-s-mexico-border-how-to-address-failures-and-protect-rights/>

Country Matrix:

Argentina – Canada – China – Costa Rica – Dominican Republic – El Salvador – France – Guatemala – Haiti – Honduras – India – Japan – Mexico – Myanmar – Nicaragua – Panama – Peru – Russia – United Kingdom – United States – Venezuela.

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