

# RESEARCH PAPER

# MESSAGE FROM THE COMMITTEE PRESIDENT

Dear Delegate,

Welcome to the research paper we have prepared for you.  
This is a great starting point for your research.

If you have any questions about this research, please write  
to us at *obsmun@obs.edu.pt*

Happy debating and see you soon.

# PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This research guide was compiled by the Secretariat of the OBSMUN 2025. OBSMUN aims to provide delegates with the opportunity to further develop their research skills that will help them in their academics. Thus, these research guides do not cover the whole breadth of the issues at hand. Instead, they are designed to provide a basis from which delegates can undertake their own research into the topics, with the aim of developing clauses from their independent research.

This guide is not sufficient as background information to prepare yourself for the country, since it does not look at the information from your countries point of view, but instead a generalised one.

## **WHEN RESEARCHING FOR INFORMATION REGARDING YOUR COUNTRY YOU MAY WANT TO ASK YOURSELF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS;**

- **Where does your country stand on the issue being addressed?**
- **Does it affect the country you are representing?**
- **Would your country be in favour / against taking action on the issue?**
- **What policies are currently in place in your country to address this issue?**
- **Given your country's stance & policies, what type of solution would you support?**
- **What measures would benefit your country?**
- **What measures would be detrimental to your country? Which ones would your country be especially be opposed to?**

# **MOCK CONFERENCE: THE ISSUE OF PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS FOR DISPLACED INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES**

## **Introduction:**

An indigenous community refers to a group of people who are the original inhabitants of a specific land or region, for example the Inuit of the Arctic, the Maya of Guatemala, and the Maori of New Zealand. Indigenous communities worldwide face displacement due to mining, deforestation, climate change, infrastructure projects, and armed conflict. These forced relocations often result in the loss of culture and livelihoods. Advocating for indigenous peoples' rights to land, culture, and self-determination is essential for protecting human rights for all.

## **Past Action by the United Nations:**

- **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, 2007):** Recognizes the right to land and culture for Indigenous Peoples. Read the full declaration here - [https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP\\_E\\_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf)
- **UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII):** Provides expert advice and promotes indigenous rights. Read more here -

<https://social.desa.un.org/issues/indigenous-peoples/unpfii/24th-session>

- **Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:** Monitors and reports on violations. Read more here - <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-indigenous-peoples>
- **SDG Goal 16:** Promotes peace, justice, and inclusive institutions, emphasizing protection for vulnerable communities. Read more here - <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16>

### **Relevant Treaties and Agreements:**

1. **UNDRIP (2007)**, resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on September 13, 2007. It outlines the individual and collective rights of Indigenous peoples, including those related to culture, identity, language, health, and education.
2. **ILO Convention No. 169** – Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, read more here - <https://www.ilo.org/resource/convention-169-and-international-day-worlds-indigenous-people>
3. **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**, a United Nations treaty that commits its member states to work towards granting their citizens

economic, social, and cultural rights. These rights include the right to work, the right to health, the right to education, and the right to an [adequate standard of living](#).

4. **Convention on Biological Diversity** – Recognizes indigenous knowledge and land rights.

### **Arguments For Protecting Displaced Indigenous Communities:**

- **Cultural Preservation:** Indigenous cultures are invaluable to global heritage.
  - Indigenous peoples hold unique cultures, which might be lost if communities are displaced. Preserving culture is essential as this safeguards our shared history, identity, and values, fostering a sense of belonging, promoting social cohesion, and driving economic development.
- **Environmental Issues:** Studies show that indigenous territories have less environmental degradation
  - Ingrained into many indigenous cultures is a respect for their environment. Indigenous territories show significantly less pollution and deforestation.
- **Justice and Reparation:** Historical injustices require redress and reparative action.
  - Historically, indigenous communities were often marginalized through colonialism. Advocating for their

rights can act as a form of reparation.

- **Decolonization and Self-determination.**
  - Recognizing indigenous rights supports their self-governance and helps decolonize legal and political systems.

### **Arguments Against or Challenges:**

- **Development vs. Rights:** States may prioritize infrastructure over indigenous land rights.
  - Governments often justify displacement for infrastructure, mining, or energy projects deemed critical for national growth.
- **Legal Recognition:** In many countries, indigenous land is not formally titled.
  - This makes it hard to enforce measures which are passed.
- **Economic Pressure:** Multinational corporations lobby for resource exploitation.
  - Indigenous lands often overlap with valuable resources. Protecting this land may hinder economic growth.

### **Case Study: Brazil (Amazon Region)**

- Brazil is home to over 300 indigenous groups, such as the Yanomami. These Amazonian tribes are threatened due to illegal gold mining and deforestation. Policies

which prioritize economic development - such as large scale highways - over the human rights of said communities have been passed, despite Brazil's 1988 constitution guaranteeing indigenous peoples' right to exist. Key examples include:

- The Yanomami crisis of 2022–2023, when illegal gold miners invaded Yanomami areas. In their search for gold, they polluted rivers and destroyed forests, leaving communities deprived of food. Additionally, the gold miners exposed the communities to diseases such as malaria, leading to a healthcare crisis in their villages.
- Although courts ordered for protection and declared a public health emergency, action was slow and poorly enforced.
- Courts ordered for the immediate removal of gold miners and the delivery of medical supplies. This did not happen. In fact, armed forces distanced themselves from anti-mining operations and hindered Indigenous institutions' response to the crisis.
- Only with the new government in 2023 was the delivery of emergency aid, such as water and medical supplies, ensured.
- By then, however, there had already been 308 recorded deaths, roughly 0.02% of the Brazilian Yanomami population.
- The UN declared this crisis as a violation of the UNDRIP.
- This case study is a clear example of the main question which this debate poses: does economic development



justify the erasure and/or harm of indigenous communities?

## **TOPIC 1: THE ISSUE OF USING STARVATION AS A WEAPON IN THE GAZA CONFLICT**

### **Introduction:**

The use of starvation as a weapon in armed conflict is a grave violation of international humanitarian law. In the ongoing conflict in Gaza, numerous reports have highlighted the deliberate denial of food, water, and essential supplies to civilians. This tactic, considered a war crime under the Rome Statute, has brought global attention to the humanitarian crisis in the region. The UN has emphasized the principle that civilians must never be targeted, especially through methods that inflict suffering such as starvation.

### **Past Action by the United Nations:**

- **Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998):** Article 8(2)(b)(xxv) classifies “intentionally using starvation of civilians as a method of warfare” as a war crime.
  - Read the full Rome Statute: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/2024-05/Rome-Statute->

eng.pdf

- **UN Security Council Resolution 2417 (2018):**  
Condemns the use of starvation as a method of warfare and highlights the need for accountability.
  - Read the full Resolution:  
[https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2417\(2018\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2417(2018))
- **World Food Programme (WFP):** Active in assessing and attempting to deliver aid in Gaza.
  - Access their website through: <https://www.wfp.org/>
- **Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA):** Documents access restrictions and food insecurity in Gaza.
  - Read more at: <https://www.ochaopt.org/>

### **Relevant Treaties and Agreements:**

1. **Geneva Conventions (1949):** Common Article 3 and Protocol I, which prohibit starvation and protect civilians.
2. **Rome Statute of the ICC (1998).**
3. **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948):**  
Declares the right to food and life.

## Arguments For Addressing Starvation in Gaza:

- **Human Rights:** Access to food and water is a basic human right.
  - This is ingrained in countless international treaties, such as the ones highlighted above.
- **International Accountability:** Prevents normalization of using starvation as a weapon.
  - It is important to address these issues as to stop them from being used in the future
- **Stability:** Food insecurity leads to unrest, extremism, and regional instability.
  - Starvation contributes to refugee flows, which destabilize the region.
- **Moral Obligation:** The international community must act to prevent mass suffering.
  - It is important to intervene as to fulfill an ethical obligation of stopping deprivation.

## Arguments Against Intervention:

- **State Sovereignty:** Nations might argue for their right to manage internal security.

- **Security Concerns:** Some argue that aid may be diverted to militant groups.
- **Political Complexities:** Aid efforts can be blocked or manipulated by geopolitical tensions.

### **Case Study: Gaza (2023–2024)**

- The Gaza strip has long faced restrictions to food and water due to blockades during the conflict. In 2023-2024, following the escalation between the Israel-Hamas conflict, international organisations report a widespread shortage of essential supplies.
- The OCHA reported that 1.1 million Gazans were in a state of “catastrophic” food shortage, roughly 52% of the Gaza population.
- UN Security Council Resolution 2417 (2018) was invoked by human rights groups to classify starvation tactics as a possible war crime.
- International law explicitly prohibits starvation as a war tactic, classifying it as a sign of a potential genocide and crime against humanity, depending on the scale of the act.
- The World Food Programme repeatedly reported aid trucks being delayed or denied entry.
- Israel stated that aid restrictions were necessary to prevent supplies from reaching Hamas. Critics argued that such restrictions disproportionately punished civilians.

- The large scale starvation happening in the Gaza strip triggered a large scale Palestinian refugee flow to countries such as Egypt or Jordan. Around 90% of the Gazan population has fled the strip.

# TOPIC 2: THE ISSUE OF PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS FOR MIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES

## Introduction:

The U.S., as one of the largest destinations for migrants, faces intense scrutiny over its treatment of asylum seekers and undocumented migrants. Reports of family separations, poor detention conditions, and legal loopholes have raised human rights concerns. During Donald Trump's second term, ICE have seen an increase in power, seen by mass deportations to El-Salvadorean prisons. The UN has repeatedly urged the U.S. to uphold international obligations under refugee and human rights law.

## Past Action by the United Nations:

- **UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants:** Issued several reports on the U.S.–Mexico border.
  - Read about the full mandate:  
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-migrants>
- **UNHCR:** Advocated for the rights of asylum seekers and called for the end of Title 42 expulsions.

- Read about the United Nations Refugee Agency:  
<https://www.unhcr.org/>
- **UN Committee on the Rights of the Child:** Condemned the separation of migrant children from their families.
- Read about the committee:  
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/crc>

### **Relevant Treaties and Agreements:**

1. **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)** – Protects the rights of all individuals, including migrants.
  - a. Read the covenant at:  
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>
2. **Convention against Torture** – Prohibits inhumane detention conditions.
  - a. Read about the convention:  
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-against-torture-and-other-cruel-inhuman-or-degrading>
3. **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** – Right to seek asylum and protection.
  - a. Full declaration available at:  
<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration->

of-human-rights

4. **1951 Refugee Convention & 1967 Protocol.**

- a. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/overview/1951-refugee-convention>

**Arguments For Migrant Rights Protection:**

- **Legal Obligation:** As a signatory to several international treaties, the U.S. must uphold migrant rights.
- **Human Dignity:** All people, regardless of status, deserve humane treatment.
- **Economic Contributions:** Migrants significantly contribute to the U.S. economy.
- **Family Unity:** Separation practices have long-term psychological effects on children.

**Arguments Against (As Voiced by Opponents):**

- **Border Security:** A strict immigration policy is seen as essential for national security.



- **Sovereignty:** Some argue that international bodies should not dictate domestic immigration policy.
- **Resource Allocation:** Concerns over strain on housing, jobs, and social services.

### **Case Study: ICE enforcement actions (Current)**

- Under the Trump administration, the US Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has received expanded funding, and policy changes have allowed for a mass deportation campaign.
- Congress have allocated an unprecedented 170 Billion US dollars to ICE, nearly three fold their budget during the Biden administration. This has been used to employ around 10,000 more ICE officers and for the building of new detention facilities.
- In July, ICE officers were told to deny bond hearings, a court proceeding held shortly after an arrest where a judge decides if a defendant can be released from jail before their trial and under what conditions. This shifts detention decisions from judges to ICE agents, allowing for indefinite detention without judge oversight.
- ICE expanded the use of Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, transferring hundreds of migrants and planning capacity for up to 30,000 detainees. Recent reports describe [abusive and inhumane conditions](#), including inadequate food and medical care, isolation, and mental health

impacts, with some human rights groups calling for an end to transfers to the facility.

- By mid-2025, ICE had exceeded capacity, reaching near 109% occupancy with over 56,000 detainees across all detention facilities.
- The government faced mounting legal and political challenges for its heavy-handed tactics. This included denying bond, expanding into “sensitive locations” like schools and hospitals, and deploying ICE agents in aggressive raid scenario
- ICE’s action this year can be seen as a humanitarian crisis, with basic constitutional rights being violated as migrants are sent to overcrowded and frankly dangerous camps.
- The increase in budget going to ICE has also decreased the budget from other areas of the public sector. The USA’s already lacking public infrastructure has only suffered more from less budgeting,
- Many of the people deported work essential jobs in low sectors of the economy. The Oxnard agricultural case, shows labor shortages, leading to crop losses and rising food prices