

Committee Guide

UNHRC 2024

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Navigating a New Age

***Securing the Right
of Freedom of
Peaceful Assembly
and Association***



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1. Personal Introduction

1.1. Christopher Hoyer

Esteemed delegates,

my name is Christopher Hoyer and I will be one of your chairs of the UNHRC this year. I am currently 23 years old and have taken part in six OLMUN-conferences before, both as a delegate and a chair, including as president of the Security Council last year. It is a great honour to once more be able to take up the position of a chair and, along with Maya, guide you through the debate. I study law with a specialization in criminal- and tax law at the University of Passau and am due to complete my studies next year. In my free time I play multiple instruments and enjoy gardening and tinkering in my workshop. I am really looking forward to this years conference and getting to know all of you! You have been presented with a wonderful opportunity. Make the best of it and enjoy your time!

With the best regards and hope for fruitful debates,

Yours very truly,

Christopher Hoyer

1.2. Maya Ece Öneş

Dear delegates,

my name is Maya Ece Öneş and I will be a chair of the UNHRC along with my co chair Christopher in this year's OLMUN. I live in Istanbul but was born in Chicago therefore making me Turkish-American. I'm 16 years old and have previously participated in OLMUN 2022 as the delegate of India in the UNHRC. It is also my first time chairing and I have to say it is an honor for my first chairing experience to be at OLMUN. I'm currently doing the IB diploma program; my Higher Level classes are English B, Psychology, and Turkish A while my Standard Level classes are Math, Biology, and Turkey in the Twentieth Century. My hobbies include literature, psychology, and music which usually is me and my friends singing and playing together. I'm definitely looking forward to this year's OLMUN and hope you all make the best of it! Believe me when I say you have the opportunity to boost your MUN skills while having fun and making friends that last.

With kind regards, yours truly,

Maya Öneş

2. Your Role as a Delegate

This year the UNHRC will debate the topic of “**Securing the Right to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association.**” For you, as a delegate, to be able to participate in the debate successfully, you need to understand this topic to an extended degree. This entails not only knowing how your country handles the issue, but also knowing how your potential partners see the topic at hand. To get you started, we have created this committee guide, trying to give you a short overview.

Firstly, we would like to stress, **that this guide cannot (!) be your only source of information!** You need to do your own, independent, research to comprehend your country’s views, since we are simply unable to research 40+ country’s opinions for you. In this regard it is imperative for you to understand your country’s policies and views and its reasons for harbouring them. Only then are you able to successfully participate in the debate, look for partners and draft a resolution. Please inform yourself about your country’s alliances and partnerships to look for suitable co-submitters, who hold similar views, for your resolution later.

Secondly, it is vital for you to understand the **Rules of Procedure (RoP)** of OLMUN. You can find them on the OLMUN website. If you do not know the RoP, it will be very difficult for you to participate in the debate. But fear not! They are very easy to understand and should any questions arise before or during our session, your chairs are equipped with the knowledge to answer them. **Familiarize yourself with the points and motions especially!** A well raised point or motion in a debate could change the course of the session. So please make sure, you are up to speed. You should also read the OLMUN handbook. In it you will find a lot of helpful hints to guide you through the process of researching our topic, drafting documents and finally conduct during the debate. You will also find the handbook on the OLMUN website.

If you have studied both these documents and conducted your own, in-depth research, you are well equipped for the debate. Should you have any questions whatsoever regarding the conference, your chairs are ready to answer them, so do not hesitate to ask.

3. The United Nations Human Rights Council

The UNHRC was established in 2006 by the General Assembly of the United Nations. It has its seat in the Palais de Nations in Geneva. Its main tasks include the “strengthening, promotion and protection of human rights around the globe.”¹ It has 47 member states, who are elected directly and individually by the majority of the General Assembly with elections taking place each year. Each time a third of the seats on the council are put up for election,

¹ See: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/about-council>; accessed on 29.02.2024, 10:22 am.

3 The United Nations Human Rights Council

with terms lasting three years and countries being able to serve two consecutive terms. The prospective members are elected from five UN regional groups, ensuring adequate regional representation. As of 2022, 123 of 193 member states have served on the UNHRC. In case of gross and systematic human rights violations, the General Assembly holds the right to vote to suspend a member states position on the UNHRC.²

The council serves to create a forum for multilateral discourse on human rights with experts and UN officials, adopts resolutions within its regular sessions to combat human rights issues, holds crisis meetings (special sessions) in case of dire violations of human rights, reviews the human rights situation within the UN member states during a Universal Periodic Review (UPR), appoints special procedures and experts who monitor the human rights situation within conflict regions and authorizes fact-finding missions on the ground to find evidence for war crimes and crimes against humanity.³

As with every other UN body, apart from the UNSC, the resolutions of the UNHRC are non-binding but carry a heavy political impact.

4. Securing the Right to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

This years topic for the UNHRC is Securing the Right to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association. The following serves to grant you a general overview over the right itself and its global standing. Of course, people have been assembling and associating over millenia, with notable examples being the Greek city states, the roman forum, Germanic Thing culture, the French Revolution or the emerging political parties of the 17th century. But not only in Europe have people assembled but also in North and South America, Africa and Asia. It is in the human nature, as social creatures, to want to express ones opinions as a group and find like-minded individuals. This is where the right to peaceful assembly and association comes in to protect said activities.

4.1. What is the Right to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association?

Article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) from 1948 states, rather plainly:

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

² Loc. Cit.: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/about-council>

³ Loc. Cit.: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/about-council>

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What appears to be a simple statement of facts in theory is in practice endlessly more complicated than would seem on the surface. Firstly, one would have to look at, which activities fall under the right to peaceful assembly and association.

In the commentary on the UDHR defenders, it is stated that the right to peaceful assembly includes many different activities, such as but not limited to: Meetings in public, meetings in private, demonstrations, vigils, marches, picket lines and other activities indoors and outdoors.⁴ The right to freedom of association is supposed to entail: “The right of individuals to interact and organize among themselves to collectively express, promote, pursue and defend common interests.”⁵

Based on the UDHR, many member states of the UN have made efforts to pass the principles of Article 20 UDHR into their own, national law. Alongside individual states, organizations like the EU have passed into binding law the article 20 UDHR.

4.2. Legal Limitations to the right of Peaceful Assembly and Association

Just from reading the Article 20 of the UDHR, one could, quite easily, surmise that the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association is one without legal boundaries. And while the thought of a right without boundaries merits admiration, the practical truth is more complicated than it would seem. In fact, it has been universally accepted that the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association is limitable in some ways.⁶ Restrictions on the right to peaceful freedom of assembly and association are necessary to ensure the safety and security of the public. When thinking about the reasons for limitation, one should consider the following: The misuse of the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association for malicious practices is quite easy. In other words: Restrictions within reason are necessary! This necessity has been recognized by the international community in 1966.

On this basis, national governments around the world had been enabled to, legally and within reason, restrict the freedom of peaceful assembly and association. Of course, when intervening in the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, be it through bans of political parties and unions, or through bans on assemblies in general, the state must abide by the prescribed reasons, established above. And a state is only able to prescribe a ban,

4 Jilani/Sekaggya, Commentary on the Universal Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Geneva 2011, p.25.

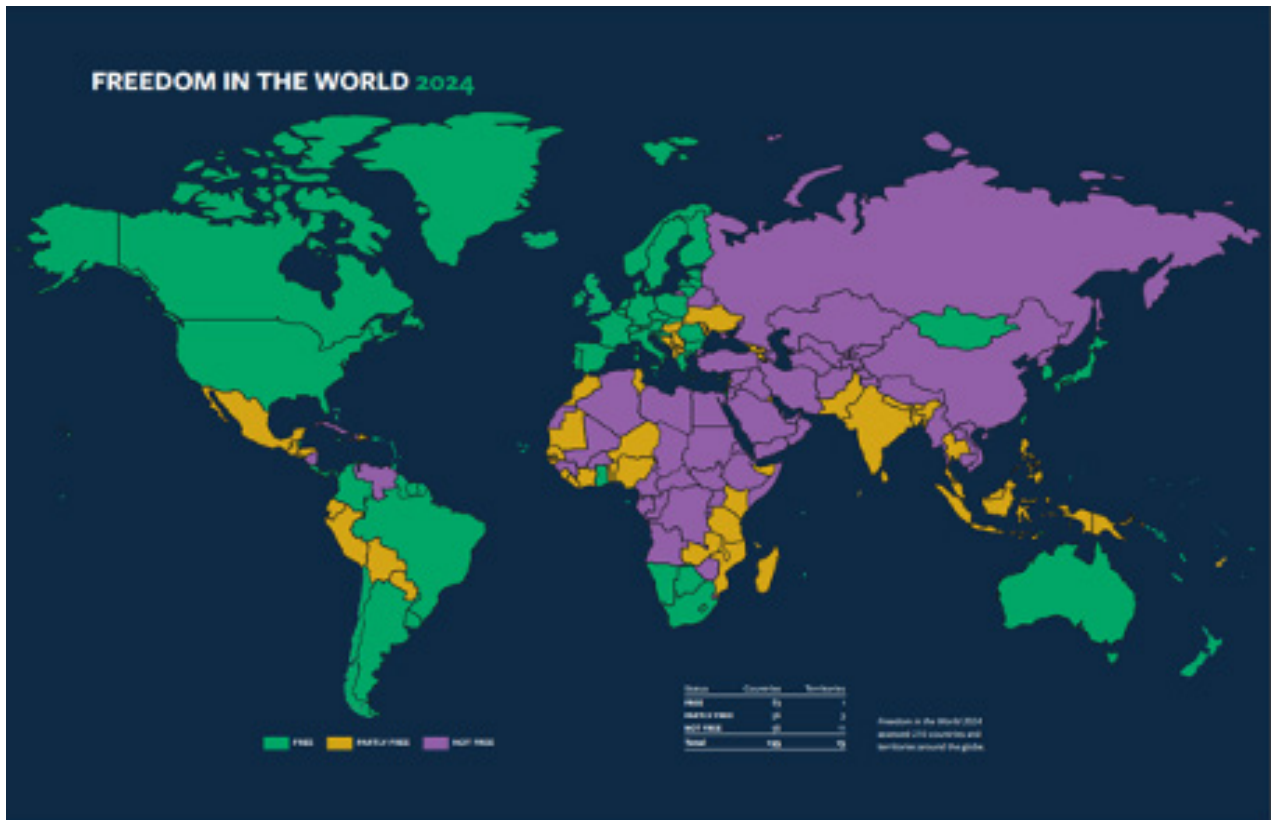
5 Loc. Cit.: Jilany/Sekaggya, p.35.

6 Taken and translated from: Depenheuer, in: Dürig/Herzog/Scholz, GG, Art. 8, Rn. 192.

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after a law, justifying the ban, has been passed.⁷ Any bans overstepping the boundaries of the reasons given above are therefore unlawful.

4.3. The Global Situation



However, where restrictions are permissible, there are also players who overstep the boundaries. The map above is the Freedom House World Index from 2024.⁸ It has been created, taking multiple factors into account, such as the right to freedom of association and assembly and gives a concise overview of the global situation.⁹ As is easily observable, some countries are classified as freer than others. In general, it can be stated, that there are noticeable differences between the global West and East and between North and South, with countries trying to consolidate power by limiting the freedoms of their inhabitants in some ways.

If you want to get a good first overview of the situation in your country, you can visit the link below in the footnotes and view the reports on the interactive map. There you can find out, why your country is classified in the way it is depicted here.

⁷ Loc. Cit.: Depenheuer.

⁸ <https://freedomhouse.org/explore-the-map?type=fmw&year=2024>; Accessed on 01.03.2024, 12:33 pm.

⁹ <https://freedomhouse.org/reports/freedom-world/freedom-world-research-methodology>; Accessed on 01.03.2024, 12:34 pm.

4.4. Threats to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

But what are the greatest threats to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association? The following serves as a small overview of examples of the biggest threats to freedom of assembly and association:

1. General and indiscriminate surveillance both online and in real life,
2. Interference with internet communications,
3. Retention of data of activists and protesters,¹⁰
4. Interference with the right on a constitutional level through bans on political opposition and assemblies in general (see Russia and China for example)¹¹
5. Arrests and physical hinderance of assembly and association.

If you look at the situation in your country and find evidence of these practices, it might indicate, that there is a restriction on the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

5. What to do Next?

After having read the short introduction above, you should then begin your research into your own countries policies and interests. You could, as proposed before, start by having a look at the Freedom House Index. Or you could dive into your investigation by yourself. If you need some inspiration, you may refer to the research-questions below:

1. How and to what extent is the delegation I am representing affected by the issue of peaceful assembly and association?
2. Did/Does your assigned country have a history of restricting the right in ways, which aren't permissible by the ICCPR?
3. Is your country in any way responsible for undermining the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association in the past?
4. Is your assigned country criticizing the situation publicly? Has your country ever made a clear statement on the situation? If so, where was the focus?

10 1,2,3: Taken from: <https://international-review.icrc.org/articles/freedom-assembly-under-attack-surveillance-interference-internet-communications-913>; Accessed on 01.03.2024, 12:57 pm.

11 Taken from: <https://studentbriefs.law.gwu.edu/ilpb/2022/11/01/the-right-to-protest-is-under-threat/>; Accessed on: 01.03.2024, 01:00 pm.

5 What to do Next?

5. Does your country have a political interest in restricting the right?

6. What actions could be taken by the UN?

In your research, you sometimes won't find clear answers on the questions above or even your own. In that case, it is helpful to interpretate the given facts and sources. Ask yourself, what your county would do, and which response/action would be appropriate for your countries policy. **You are a delegate of your assigned country.** Try to think and act in the way your country's policy requires you to. This is why it is so important, that you understand your country in general and not only on the given circumstance. Try to inform yourself about your country's history, alliances, partners, and constitution. It may be helpful to consider getting in touch with your countries embassy and asking them, if they are able to answer your questions.

Like mentioned before, **deepened preparation** is very important and the key to having a great time during OLMUN. While getting ready for this year's conference, you should prepare both a draft resolution and a policy statement, where you can incorporate your research on the topic and the position of the delegation you have been assigned to represent at the conference.

The policy statement consists of a brief, informal overview on your assigned country's position and policy. It is your first expression of your ideas in front of the committee and possess the chance gaining sympathizers even before the lobbying process begins. In hearing other policy statements, you can receive important information about the other countries and find possible partners easily. Noting, that this would be your first appearance in front of the committee, we would urge you to prepare a precise and meaningful statement. In general, we recommend reading out your policy statement, as it is a great introduction to the debate and getting comfortable with the debating process. Policy statements may be short but should entail a **minimum of 200 words**. However, they should not be longer than 500 words.

The **Draft Resolution** is the document, that sets out the current challenges and proposes solutions. All the work the UN is doing, is based and expressed by these resolutions and they form the basis for our committee sessions. Therefore, a great deal of your effort in preparing for OLMUN should be invested in writing a **constructive resolution**. More information and a detailed look into how to write such documents are available in the OLMUN Handbook. For orientation and inspiration please also have a look at resolutions from the UN and passed resolutions from past OLMUN conferences, keeping in mind, that your resolution will probably be expanded/amended during our conference.

6 Helpful Advice

For all ambitious Delegates we recommend giving an Opening Speech in the General Assembly where all Delegates participating at OLMUN 2024 will be present. This is optional; however, the challenge can be quite a fun one to take on! For further information please consult the OLMUN Handbook or write us an email!

6. Helpful Advice

- Be aware that you do not represent your personal opinion and ideas! **You are the delegate of your assigned country and behave accordingly.** This is the only way to have an exciting debate.
- Practice speaking in front of the group and be prepared for everyone to speak in front of our committee.
- Find out about possible partners for your resolution **early on.**
- Most importantly, besides the committee meeting, talk a lot with others to make new friends and attend the evening events. This way you will get the full OLMUN experience!
- Gentlemen, do not forget your suits and ties. Ladies, do not forget appropriate shoes! We will be quite strict about the dress code! If you need inspiration, we would recommend the “How to Dress for OLMUN”- video on the OLMUN Youtube-channel.

See you soon and all the best,

Christopher & Maya



7. Helpful Links

We have collected a few links that can help you to start off your research. However, keep in mind that they are just meant as a friendly tip. Your research can and should go beyond these links and does not necessarily have to include any of them.

7.1. General Information

- Regarding the Human Rights Committee:
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/home>
- View ratification status by each country:¹²
<https://indicators.ohchr.org/>
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights:
<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

7.2. Topic-specific Information

- 50 million people in modern slavery: UN report
<https://www.un.org/en/delegate/50-million-people-modern-slavery-un-report>
- Human Trafficking:
<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/crime.html>
- UN Protocol on Trafficking in Persons:
<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/protocol-prevent-suppress-and-punish-trafficking-persons> (<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/protocol.html>)
- UN's response towards Human Trafficking:
<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/our-response.html>
- The blue heart campaign:
<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/blueheart/>
- The SHERLOC portal:
<https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/en/st/home.html>
- United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children
<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking-fund.html>
- Poverty:
<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/goal-01/>
- Facts and figures:

¹² The ratification status on the OHCHR indicators website shows which human rights treaties have been signed and/or ratified by countries around the world. However, signing or ratifying a treaty does not necessarily guarantee that it will be fully implemented. Some countries may sign or ratify a treaty to show their commitment to human rights, while others may do so as a form of political posturing without intending to implement the treaty's provisions fully.

5 How to Prepare for the Conference

- <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/lang--en/index.htm>
- Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022:
https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2022/GLO-TiP_2022_web.pdf
- UN's Office of the High Commissioner Fact Sheet 36 on Human Rights and Human Trafficking:
<https://www.humanrightscareers.com/issues/10-causes-of-human-trafficking/#sidr-main>
- Modern slavery is on the rise:
<https://www.un.org/en/observances/slavery-abolition-day>
- Netflix documentary by Thomas Robsahm and Tina Davis - Experts, activists and survivors discuss the widespread phenomenon of modern slavery and possible approaches to eradicate it (Trailer: <https://youtu.be/AHPmVh5WRu8>)



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**23rd International
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