



MODEL UNITED NATIONS

SOCOMUN XXXII

CCPCJ

TOPIC: DISCRIMINATION IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM



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Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) Discrimination in the Criminal Justice System

Hello delegates, and welcome to SOCOMUN 2023. My name is Sage Reeves and I will be your Head Chair for this conference. I am a senior at Santa Margarita Catholic High School and this will be my fourth year as a member of the MUN program and my second time serving as a Head Chair for SOCOMUN. SOCOMUN was the first MUN conference I ever attended as a freshman, and I have loved being involved with MUN ever since. In this committee, we will be discussing Discrimination in the Criminal Justice System, a very timely and important topic that is sure to spark a lot of interesting arguments and debate. We are excited to hear your ideas on how to end discrimination in the criminal justice system, and we also encourage you to listen to alternative ideas and learn from your fellow delegates. One of the best things about MUN is expanding your knowledge about a range of international issues and working together to advocate for solutions that can help make the world a better place for all of us. In addition to MUN, I am a competitive dancer and a member of the Varsity Song team here at SMCHS. I also volunteer with Campus Ministry and am a full diploma International Baccalaureate (IB) candidate. I look forward to meeting you all!

Hello, I'm Jerry Zhou and I'll be your Vice-Chair for SOCOMUN this year. I am a junior here at Santa Margarita Catholic High School and have been in MUN since my freshman year. MUN has taught me invaluable lessons in public speaking, research, and problem solving. It has introduced me to various perspectives on the world's most prevalent issues. Outside of MUN, I enjoy coding, playing tennis, eating, and sleeping. I wish all of you the best of luck, and I look forward to meeting you!

Hi delegates, I'm Angelina Tao and I am going to be your Rapporteur. I am a sophomore at Santa Margarita, and this is my second year doing MUN. One of the best things I like about this program is how it challenges me to step out of my comfort zone to develop my public speaking and research skills. Outside of MUN, I enjoy golfing, reading, and painting. I hope you enjoy the conference!

If you have any questions, please email us at: socomunccpcj@gmail.com.



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Background:

In this committee, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice will focus on the important topic of Discrimination in the Criminal Justice System. A just and fair criminal justice system is a cornerstone of our society and our democracy. The assumption that individuals are innocent until proven guilty is a key component of our justice system. Objectivity, impartiality, and fairness in our criminal justice system are what give it its legitimacy among citizens of the United States and the world. When discrimination is allowed to infiltrate our criminal justice system, at any point and in any form, it undermines the integrity and authority of that system and our nation.

According to the International Labor Organization (Article 1(1) ILO 111), discrimination is defined as, “any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in the employment or occupation.” Equal opportunity and equal treatment are imperative tenets of the criminal justice system in order to ensure that it is fair and just.

It is important to note that discrimination can take many forms. These include: direct discrimination, when a person is treated differently because of a personal or physical characteristic; indirect discrimination, when a group of people who share a similar characteristic are put at a disadvantage; and structural discrimination, which is a pre-determined bias inherent in society. Discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and sexuality can sometimes stem from stereotypes and prejudices in society. Both occur when an individual or society assumes characteristics about other individuals or groups they have never met.

Sadly, there is substantial evidence that discrimination exists throughout the criminal justice system, both in the U.S. and the world. Policing and the criminal justice system is the first topic to explore. Racialized policing has a history dating all the way back to the end of the Civil War. Although slavery was ended, many former Confederate States adopted Black Codes, to still punish black Americans. Many argue that racial profiling, a controversial tactic in policing that is still used across the world today, has resulted in higher misdemeanors and drug charges for people of color. Race also can play a role down the line in the criminal justice system in things like longer jail times, pre-trial detention, biased jury selection and harsher sentencing. Mass incarceration and sentencing reform are additional aspects of this issue that urgently need reform. Discrimination greatly affects our society and people’s lives. Therefore, it is important to be transparent about crime data, and monitor the conduct of our courts and police officers.

In 2018, The Sentencing Project delivered a “Report to the United Nations on Racial Disparities in the U.S. Criminal Justice System.” The report to the UN Rapporteur outlined “contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.” It provided evidence that there is a double standard in court for different people based on their race and wealth by using information gathered from our current justice system. It then focused on policing, pre-trial, sentencing, parole, and post-prison/collateral consequences on society.



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Many nations have laws against discrimination, and therefore many argue that the criminal justice system itself is not characterized by racial discrimination. However, this makes it more important that we examine how discrimination does manage to impact our criminal justice system, and what we can do to prevent it.

Possible Solutions:

As delegates approach the problem of Discrimination in the Criminal Justice System, there are many facets to explore. This includes the various kinds of discrimination and various groups that are most often discriminated against. Think about how people are discriminated against in the criminal justice system based on gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality. Consider the disproportionate numbers of minority groups in prisons and tactics that police use today to fight crime.

Detailed solutions should explore these issues and specific actions that can be taken to counter discrimination in all aspects of the criminal justice system. Examples of solutions that should be discussed in greater detail include anti-discrimination education, awareness, and laws, as well as law enforcement and criminal justice system reforms. Be sure to research your country's policy and past actions related to this topic. This will help you gain an understanding of what has been done, why it has or has not worked to date, and the issues that still need to be addressed.

Please note that funding should not be viewed as an impediment to any particular solution and should not be the focus of debate. It is assumed that any solutions approved by the committee will receive funding from the United Nations.

Questions to Consider

As you prepare to discuss this topic during the conference, the following are some questions to consider:

1. What is the general definition of discrimination, and what are the root causes of discrimination?
2. How do noticeable and publicized incidents of police brutality and racial profiling influence discrimination in the criminal justice system?
3. How can discrimination be prevented in law enforcement and throughout the criminal justice system?
4. What are your country's policies on racial equality, women's rights, and LGBTQ+ rights?
 - a. How has your country supported these rights?
5. Why have your country's past actions to combat discrimination in the criminal justice system been ineffective?
6. How do you plan to inform the public about this problem and enforce solutions?

Please note that you will not need to directly answer these questions in committee. These are just questions for you to consider as you focus your research and form your own solutions and policy suggestions.



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