

MegaMUN 2026

"A World in transition"

General Assembly

**Addressing human right abuses
induced by authoritarian regimes**

Letter from the presidency

Dear delegates,

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to MEGAMUN 2026's General Assembly ! As the Presidency of the GA, we, Emma and Flavio, are extremely honored to have the chance to guide you through the biggest and most important body of this MUN. We will be tackling a very relevant and current issue: Addressing human right abuses induced by authoritarian regimes.

We kindly ask you, as our delegates, to thoroughly prepare a policy statement in which you explain your assigned country's position to the issue, past interventions your country has taken to address it and how you plan to contribute to solving it in the future.

We encourage each and everyone of you to raise your voice, always stick to your country's position and present it as convincingly as possible. At the same time, we invite you to listen carefully to the propositions of other delegates and, most importantly, to work towards finding compromises. Despite the serious part, our main goal is for everyone to enjoy themselves, to laugh, to connect with each other and to create unforgettable memories! With that being said, we are very excited to meet all of you in January :) If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us, we are happy to help !

Sincerely,

**Your president of the General Assembly,
Emma Conzemius**

**Your vice-president of the General Assembly,
Flavio Jager**



Introduction to the committee

The **United Nations General Assembly** (UNGA) is the main policy-making organ of the Organization. Comprising **all Member States**, it provides a unique forum for multilateral discussion of the full spectrum of international issues covered by the Charter of the United Nations. Each of the 193 Member States of the United Nations has an **equal vote**.

The UNGA also makes key decisions for the UN, including:

- appointing the Secretary-General on the recommendation of the Security Council
- electing the non-permanent members of the Security Council
- approving the UN budget

The General Assembly meets under its president or the UN Secretary-General in annual sessions to discuss specific issues through dedicated agenda items or sub-items, which lead to the adoption of resolutions.

Most questions are decided in the General Assembly by a simple **majority**. Each member country has one vote. Voting on certain important questions; namely recommendations on peace and security, budgetary concerns, and the election, admission, suspension, or expulsion of members; is by a **two-thirds majority** of those present and voting. Apart from the approval of budgetary matters, including the adoption of a scale of assessment, Assembly resolutions are not binding on the members. The Assembly may make recommendations on any matters within the scope of the UN, except matters of peace and security under the Security Council's consideration.

Introduction to the topic

“Addressing Human Right Abuses Induced by Authoritarian Regimes”

Definition of Authoritarian Regimes

Authoritarian regimes are political systems characterized by the concentration of power in a **single authority** or a small group, often maintained through repressive and undemocratic means. These regimes typically lack the institutional structures that support checks and balances, resulting in limited political pluralism and constrained civil liberties. Authoritarian regimes often manipulate or do not even proceed through electoral processes to maintain their power and bypass the risk of other organizations gaining might.

The importance of human rights

Human rights are fundamental **freedoms** and **protections** to which all individuals are entitled, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or any other status. These rights are enshrined in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (UDHR), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. The UDHR outlines a broad spectrum of rights, including civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, serving as a universal standard for human dignity and equality.

Respecting human rights are crucial to maintain **justice**, **peace** and the **protection of human dignity**. Authoritarian regimes often abuse these standards to maintain control and to avoid any risk of losing power and prestige within their regime. This **abuse** results in whole populations living in fear and danger, a society that doesn't have any participation in societal life and cannot enjoy any benefits of their labour and creativity.

Main Issue

The denying of human rights by authoritarian regimes poses multiple issues that are not limited to the individuals themselves, but rather also gravely affect society on a national and international level. The development of nations and their international relations highly depends on the internal development and upholding of human rights. But how?

- First and foremost, **authoritarian repression normalises measures such as torture, censorship, arbitrary detention and murder** in order to keep the regime up, instilling fear in the population.
- Second, it **suppresses political participation** by denying free elections (or controlling them) and independent media, which oftentimes increases the use of violence by authorities and individuals alike, taking away the feeling of safety from the people.
- Third, **neutrality is replaced by arbitrariness**, and as a result, laws will be biased and enforced accordingly. The police hence become part of the regime, their role having changed from protecting the people to controlling and suppressing the people.
- Additionally, **repression discourages foreign investments** and distorts the market due to corruption, and as a result could divert resources to internal security rather than development, creating disparities.
- Moreover, the **quality of education is heavily degraded** due to a highly controlled agenda and misinformation that children and students are taught by institutions. In these cases, critical thinking is discouraged and thwarted, creating future generations that will uphold national norms and standards, opposing change and democratic discussion.

All of these measures destabilise a nation at its core, making bilateral or multilateral relationships with other nations on a stable basis tricky to upkeep, as arbitrary rule is unpredictable and more often than not untrustworthy.

International relations with authoritarian states are oftentimes more transactional, bilateral and disregarding of public opinion, in order to maximise economic development whilst a handful of elite officials remain in control. The protection of human rights is, contrarily to more democratic States, rejected as a form of interference.

Repressive regimes may sometimes show more development than democratic regimes, but the former are more at risk of sudden **political collapses, violent uprisings** and **economic shocks**. The difference in South Korea and North Korea illustrates this well: South Korea gradually expanded its civil and political rights after the 1980s, whereas North Korea continued on a totalitarian repression basis. As a result, South Korea is not a high-income, innovation-driven economy, where conversely, North Korea remains impoverished and dependent on aid.

Ultimately, the UNGA **cannot force any nation to conform to regulations**, but debating and finding compromises can set a powerful and overarching international tone that can serve as guidance for every nation's future policies.

Historical context

Although the concept of human rights is abstract, how it is applied has a direct and enormous **impact on daily life** worldwide. Millions suffer from the abuse of human rights induced by authoritarian regimes, and this issue goes way back in time. In the last decade alone, authoritarian rule has denied civil and political liberties to billions.

The Nazi Holocaust

One of the most horrendous human rights violations was the Holocaust, orchestrated by Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime during World War II. The systematic, state-sponsored **persecution and murder** of over six million Jews and millions of others, including Poles, Romani people, disabled individuals, and political prisoners, serves as a grim reminder of the potential for human cruelty when unchecked power collides with extreme ideology.

Stalin's purges

A second example of past major human rights violations is the Great Purge under Joseph Stalin's rule in the Soviet Union. Between 1936 and 1938, Stalin's regime carried out a campaign of political repression, resulting in the **execution, imprisonment, and forced labour** of millions of people. The purges targeted perceived enemies of the state, including political opponents, intellectuals and ordinary citizens.

Colonialism

The impacts of colonialism on the subjugated countries are manifold: colonial rule **normalises military dictatorships** (e.g.: Pakistan's weak institutions and powerful military unbalance), it may **promote single-party dominances** and political and violent repression (normalisation of coercive governance in Kenya after independence), and it definitely leaves **power vacuums** that are inadequately filled (secessionist movements and coups in DRC, followed by the Congo Wars due to and fights over resources and bad neighbouring relations)

Current situation

Human rights are not confined to history, they continue to occur in various parts of the world today in countless forms.

Suppression of Freedom of Speech and Press

Freedom of speech, a human right, is frequently curtailed through stringent laws that criminalize criticism of the government. For example, in China, the government employs broad laws against "subversion of state power" to detain activists, journalists, and academics who express dissenting views. The Great Firewall of China restricts access to foreign news websites and social media platforms, effectively stifling free expression online.

Authoritarian regimes often also prohibit public gatherings and demonstrations, deeming them threats to national security or public order. In Russia for example, laws regulating public assembly are used to prevent opposition rallies and participants in unauthorized protests face arrest and harsh penalties. The Russian government's crackdown on non-governmental organizations (NGOs), through the "foreign agents" law, restricts their ability to operate freely and independently.

Arbitrary Arrests, Detention and Torture

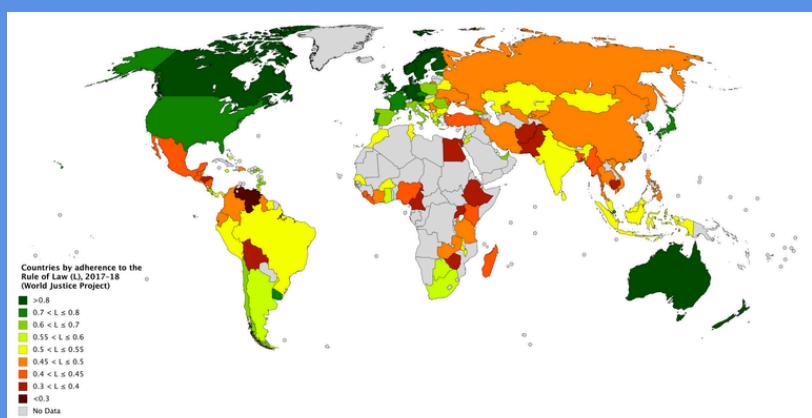
Authoritarian regimes often use arrest and detention as a means of instilling fear in the population, to prevent them from expressing their views on political events or protesting against them, and to eliminate sections of the population that could pose a threat to the regime. These practices are often justified under the guise of security or counterterrorism. In Egypt, the government has used emergency laws to detain thousands of political opponents, activists, and journalists without due process. Many detainees are held incommunicado, denied legal representation, and subjected to prolonged pretrial detention.

Torture continues to be used as a means of intimidation in several regions of the world, including the Middle East, parts of Africa, Asia, and even Europe. Such practices constitute a grave violation of fundamental human rights and human dignity and directly contravene the absolute prohibition of torture established in the United Nations Convention against Torture.

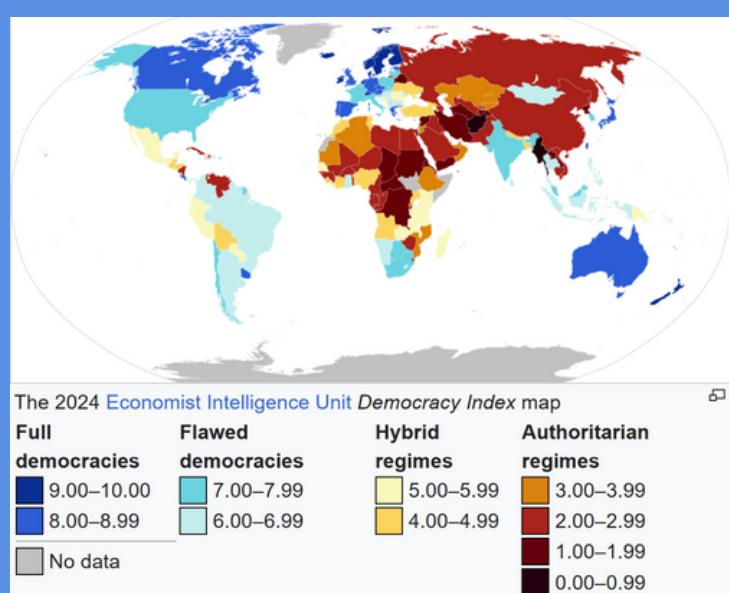
The persistence of this issue is often linked to structural weaknesses within certain states, including limited institutional development and inadequate criminal justice systems. In some cases, authorities disregard rehabilitative or psychological approaches to criminal justice due to high financial costs and because such methods conflict with political strategies that rely on fear and repression to maintain control.

Important statistics and infographics

- According to CIVICUS monitor of civic space freedom, only around 7 percent of the global population live in free or relatively open civic space
- 27% of countries still practice the death penalty, some even having executed minors. Most of these occur in China (more than all other nations combined), the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Yemen
- At least 375 writers and artists were jailed in 2024 simply for writing or advocating, a historical all-time high.



The World Justice Project Rule of Law Index, a quantitative assessment tool that shows the extent to which countries adhere to the rule of law in practice. It takes into account corruption, security, fundamental rights, open government, criminal justice etc.



Overview of the democratic situation of nations worldwide based on measurements of pluralism, civil liberties and political culture

Actions of UN

The United Nations (UN) is at the forefront of international human rights advocacy. Various UN bodies, such as the Human Rights Council (HRC) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), are instrumental in addressing human rights abuses. The HRC conducts Universal Periodic Reviews (UPRs) to assess human rights practices in all member states, including authoritarian regimes. These reviews provide a forum for holding states accountable and recommending improvements.



Special rapporteurs and independent experts appointed by the UN investigate specific human rights issues or situations in particular countries. These reports bring international attention to abuses and are helpful for advocacy and action. The UN Special Rapporteur on North Korea for example has documented extensive human rights violations, prompting international condemnation and calls for accountability.

It took the United Nations half a century to develop a system of fundamental human rights treaties and mechanisms for monitoring and enforcement of, but without a stable response from democratic societies, it can become very easy to dictators to break them. To avoid such an outcome, the UN calls for strong international cooperation, respect for the rule of law, independent institutions, and constant monitoring

Points to consider

Propaganda

Propaganda is a tool often used by authoritarian regimes to manipulate public perception and maintain regime legitimacy by influencing the opinion and behaviour of the society. A classic example would be the former Soviet Union's use of propaganda to promote communist ideologies.

Surveillance

Surveillance, being a hallmark of authoritarian regimes, is a strong violation of human rights. It is used to monitor a population's actions, especially on social media, thereby maintaining control over the spread of different opinions that could harm the regime's policies.

Violence and intimidation

Violence and intimidation are practices that repressive regimes cannot avoid, and this is a crucial problem that directly violates all human rights. In Iran for example, authorities continue to intimidate and imprison activists and dissidents, using arbitrary arrests and reported beatings to suppress political opposition.

Censorship

Restricting access to information, censoring media and suppressing free speech are also crucial for authoritarian regimes to strengthen their dominion. North Korea's strict control over all media content illustrates extreme censorship practices.

Main organisations

1. The United Nations system

The UN comprises multiple committees monitoring and responding to authoritarian regimes, like the UN Human Rights Council UNHRC (i.a. addresses violations and conducts investigations), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights OHCHR (i.a. monitors and reports on human rights conditions globally, provides documentation and supports victims),

The International Criminal Court ICC (persecutes individuals for crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide, targeting senior officials and not states, as well as acting as a deterrent against mass abuses, but with limited jurisdiction)

2. Global NGOs

There are many international organisations also contributing, like Amnesty International (documents human rights abuses, campaigns against mistreatment of individuals, like torture and political imprisonment, and submits widely read reports), the Human Rights Watch (focuses on international law and produces detailed investigations that are frequently cited by governments and courts), the Freedom House (measures political rights and civil liberties worldwide, publishes the Freedom in the World index), and CIVICUS (focuses on civic space and civil society, tracking repression of NGOs and activists)

3. Regional Human Rights Systems

There are also Regional Bodies playing a role, like the European Court of Human Rights ECHR (enforces the European Convention on Human Rights and issues binding judgements against member states), and similar commissions in the Americas and Africa

4. Democracy and Governance Institutions

These are organisations that strengthen political systems and institutions, helping with prevention and structural changes. Among them are the International IDEA (advises governments and reduces opportunities for electoral manipulation), the NED (funds civil society organisations, independent media and labour unions), and the OSF (funding human rights advocacy through legal aid, anti-corruption initiatives etc.)

Dictionary

Arbitrary detention

The imprisonment of a person without due process or legal justification.

Censorship

Suppressing or restricting access to information, speech, or media.

Corruption

Abuse of power by officials for personal gain, weakening justice and rights.

Harassment

Systematic targeting or intimidation of individuals for political or social reasons.

Intimidation

Using threats or fear to control or silence citizens.

Surveillance

Government tracking of citizens' activities to suppress dissent.

Propaganda

Biased or misleading information used to control public perception.

Theocracy

Government controlled by religious authorities, sometimes justifying repression.

Torture

Inflicting severe pain or suffering to punish, intimidate, or extract information.

Totalitarianism

A system where the state controls nearly every aspect of public and private life.

Most involved countries



**The Russian
Federation**



**The People's Republic
of China**



Saudi Arabia



North Korea



Israel



Iran and Iraq

HELPFUL SOURCES



Global assessment on civic freedoms (good for an overview of global openness of civic space)



CIVICUS: Civic space monitor



UN Special Procedures (Special Rapporteurs)



Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)



Amnesty international



Freedom House



International Commission of Jurists



World Bank - Governance Indicators (WGI)



Carnegie Endowment for International Peace - Democracy & Rule of Law Program

SOURCES USED



Struggle for human rights in authoritarian regimes



Report: Global human rights regime



Going on offense against authoritarians at the un human rights council and beyond



UN Convention against Torture (1984)



Security Council Report (2013)



Reports of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders



Freedom House - No Way In or Out: Authoritarian Controls on the Freedom of Movement (2024)



Amnesty International - Human Rights and the Escalation of Authoritarian Practices Around the World (2025)



International Research Group on Authoritarianism and Counter-Strategies