



SOCHUM

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Letters From Presidents

Letter From President Gutiérrez Diazgranados

Dear Honorable Delegates,

Welcome to the Session of the Social, Cultural, & Humanitarian Committee (SOCHUM)! Over the next several days, we will work together to address the global challenges posed by the Power of State vs. Human Dignity. As each of you contribute through your curiosity, critical thinking, and sense of responsibility, I hope we will be able to come up with solutions that advance our shared mission.

The problems faced at SOCHUM are complex and continue to be of great interest; as such, they require us to explore the balance between governance, technology, and the basic rights of all people (especially migrants and minorities). Your voice, positions, and ideas will play an essential role in achieving a productive and meaningful discussion.

While you contribute to the committee, I encourage you to engage in a respectful manner, think creatively and collaboratively with your peers, and strive to go beyond superficial answers to the



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challenges presented. In addition to having the chance to represent your nation, you have the opportunity to become a more knowledgeable and engaged global citizen.

Good luck throughout the model, I cannot wait to see how our collective thoughts and solutions develop.

Best wishes,

President

Maria Camila Gutierrez Diaz Granados

Letter From President Gutiérrez Pizarro

Dear Honorable Delegates,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Social, Cultural, and Humanitarian Committee (SOCHUM). As we begin this model, you will take on the role of representatives responsible for discussing some of the most important challenges related to human rights and state authority.

During this session, we will explore the balance between State Power and the Protection of Human Dignity. These issues affect millions of people around the world, especially vulnerable groups such as



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migrants and minorities. For this reason, your ideas, arguments, and participation will be essential in guiding the discussion.

I encourage you to engage in debate with respect, responsibility, and an open mind. Effective diplomacy is not only about defending your position, but also about listening to others, thinking critically, and working together to find realistic and meaningful solutions. Do not be afraid to question ideas and go beyond simple answers.

Model United Nations is not only about representing a country, but also about developing your ability to think globally and act responsibly. I encourage you to take this opportunity to learn, grow, and make your voice heard.

I look forward to seeing your ideas and the solutions you will develop throughout the model.

Best regards,

President

Amelia Inés Gutiérrez Pizarro



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Introduction to the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM)

The Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, or the Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee (SOCHUM). Established in 1945 along with the general assembly after World War II, in efforts to prevent other atrocities. SOCHUM focuses on the protection of Human Rights, the preservation of cultures, gender equality, refugee protection, and social development while tackling discrimination, crime prevention, youth issues, and disabilities. The committee examines Human Rights Council reports and advocates for marginalized groups (The UN General Assembly's Third Committee – Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Issues | UN DESA | United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.).

SOCHUM derives its legitimacy from the UN Charter, providing equal representation to member states in a democratic forum for multilateral dialogue. Working to design peace treaties and advocate for humanitarian and cultural complications in the international community (*SOCHUM: Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Committee* | *IMUNA* | *NHSMUN* | *Model UN*, n.d.).

Topic A: The Expansion of State Power in the Digital Age: Implications of Artificial Intelligence and Surveillance for Human Dignity and Migrant Rights



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Key Concepts

1. **Institutionalized Discrimination:** Laws, policies, or practices embedded in state institutions systematically disadvantage migrants by imposing barriers such as biased visa processing or unrecognized qualifications, perpetuating exclusion from jobs and services.
2. **Dehumanization:** Portraying immigrants as subhumans, in worst cases, animals, through rhetoric or political discourse, stripping them of their inherent worth and justifying the harsh treatment, such as family separations at borders or brutal arrests that fuel apathy towards human suffering.
3. **Erosion of Fundamental Rights:** Gradual denial of core protections, including access to healthcare, education, fair trials, and often via prolonged undocumented status, exposes immigrants to exploitation and weakens the legal safeguards.
4. **Xenophobia:** Irrational hatred or fear towards foreigners, which manifests in anti-migrant protests or hate crimes, further exacerbating discrimination by framing the migrant population as invaders and preventing integration efforts.
5. **Human Dignity:** Intrinsic worth of a person, violated when migrants face public shaming or discrimination, as SOCHUm upholds it through the promotion of equal respect regardless of origin.



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6. **National Sovereignty:** The rights of states to control the border and migration flow, often invoked to defend restrictive policies, yet balances against international obligation to prevent dignity abuses in detention.
7. **Exclusion:** Systematic barring of migrants from accessing social benefits, housing, or political participation, deepening poverty cycles in host communities, and creating parallel societies.
8. **Power Asymmetry:** Unequal dynamic where migrants are left vulnerable in poorer regions by the wealthy host, evidenced in exploitation through unfair contracts or unequal aid distribution.
9. **Detention and Restrictive Practices:** Indefinite holding of overcrowded facilities or pushback at frontiers, infringing dignity and liberty by treating migrants as criminals rather than humans with rights.

Introduction

In the digital age, the growth of State Power has been closely linked to the increasing rise of technology. Tools such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Biometric Identification Systems (BIS), and Digital Surveillance are now being commonly used by governments to manage populations, enforce laws, and control borders. These have been often presented as efficient and necessary solutions to modern security challenges. However, their use in migration governance has raised serious concerns about human dignity, transparency, and the protection of fundamental human rights.



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Digital Surveillance has expanded considerably around the world; according to Freedom House (2023), at least 75 countries currently use AI-based surveillance technologies, in which Facial Recognition Systems, Predictive Policing tools, and Large-scale data collection are included. Many of these technologies have been applied in immigration control and border security, where States argue they are essential to address irregular migration, terrorism, and organized crime. Despite these justifications, the absence of clear international rules has allowed many of these systems to operate with limited public oversight and accountability.

Migration governance, on the other hand, has become one of the main areas where States exercise power through digital tools. The International Organization for Migration reports that there are over 281 million international migrants worldwide, many of them facing increased monitoring due to their legal and social vulnerability (IOM, 2022). Biometric databases, which include fingerprinting and facial recognition, are widely used during asylum processes and border crossings to identify and track individuals, and while these systems aim to improve efficiency, they often turn people into data profiles, raising concerns about privacy and the loss of personal control over sensitive information.

The use of artificial intelligence in migration systems has also revealed clear inequalities. Studies show that facial recognition technologies have higher error rates when identifying people with darker skin tones, women, and ethnic minorities (Buolamwini & Gebru, 2018). In migration contexts, these errors can lead to wrongful identification, unnecessary surveillance, or even unjust detention. This challenges the idea that technology is neutral and shows how digital systems can reflect and reinforce existing discrimination.



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Beyond border control, constant digital surveillance can strongly affect human dignity. Migrants who are aware that they are being monitored may avoid accessing public services, participating in community activities, or reporting abuse. This phenomenon, often described as a “chilling effect,” limits freedom of expression and increases fear among already vulnerable populations (UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy, 2022). Over time, such practices risk normalizing the treatment of migrants as security risks rather than as individuals with rights and dignity.

This topic invites the committee to explore the balance between state authority and human dignity in the digital age. While States have the right to regulate migration and protect national security, they are also responsible for upholding international human rights standards, including the right to privacy, equality before the law, and protection from discrimination. The key question is whether current uses of AI and digital surveillance respect these obligations or contribute to the gradual weakening of migrant rights.

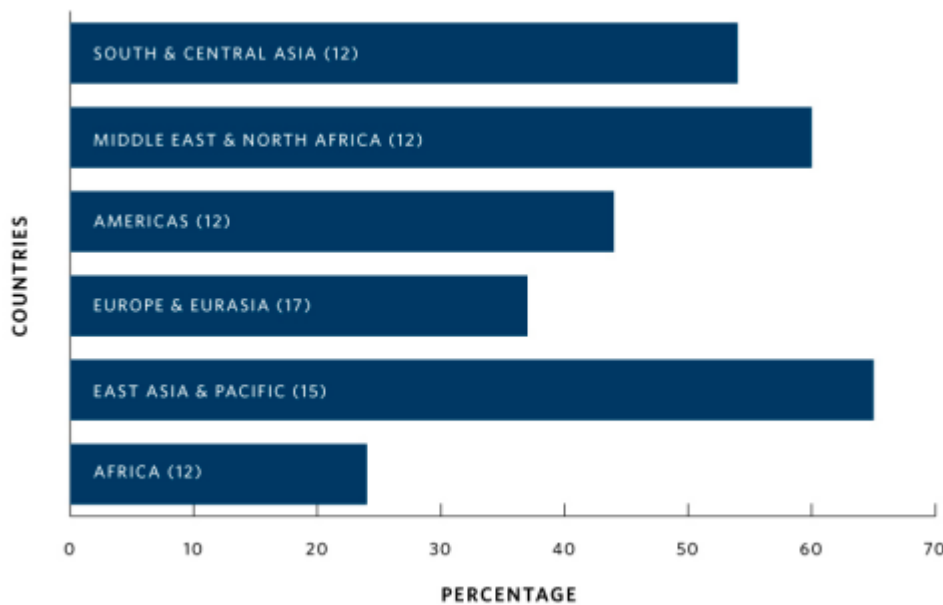
Ultimately, the debate on state power, digital surveillance, and migration governance goes beyond technology itself. It is a political and ethical discussion about how far States should be allowed to go in the name of security and efficiency. Delegates are encouraged to assess whether existing national and international frameworks are sufficient or whether stronger global regulations are needed to ensure that technological progress does not come at the cost of human dignity.

Subtopic A: State Surveillance and the Expansion of Digital Control

Current Situation and Approach

In the digital age, the rapid growth of technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), biometric identification systems, and large-scale data collection has greatly increased the ability of states to monitor and control populations. These tools are now widely used in areas like border security and migration management, often justified as necessary for maintaining national security and improving efficiency. However, their increasing use has raised important concerns about privacy, transparency, and the protection of fundamental human rights (Amnesty International, 2024a; Amnesty International, 2024b).

Percentage of Countries by Region Adopting AI Surveillance



NOTE: The numbers in parentheses indicate how many countries per region have adopted AI surveillance.

State surveillance has moved beyond traditional methods like physical monitoring and has become a data-driven system of digital control. Governments now use AI in processes such as visa applications, border checks, and identity verification, allowing decisions to be made based on algorithms and large amounts of data (Council of Europe, 2025; Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, 2025). This has led to the idea of “digital borders,” where migration is controlled not only at physical frontiers but also through technology that tracks individuals across different stages of their movement.

In migration contexts, these technologies are especially important because migrants are often required to provide biometric data, such as fingerprints or facial scans, in order to access services or legal protection. While this can improve organization and efficiency, it also means that migrants are increasingly treated as data profiles rather than individuals, raising concerns about privacy and personal autonomy (Molnar, 2025).



Additionally, the use of AI and surveillance systems can contribute to discrimination. Since these systems rely on existing data, they may reflect biases that already exist in society, leading to unequal



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treatment based on factors like nationality or ethnicity. At the same time, many of these technologies lack transparency, making it difficult for individuals to understand or challenge decisions that affect their legal status (Amnesty International, 2024b). Although international human rights frameworks protect rights such as privacy for all individuals, current regulations have not fully adapted to these new technological developments (Migration Policy Institute, 2004).

Current Challenges

Despite the increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI) and digital surveillance in migration governance, their implementation presents significant challenges related to human rights, regulation, and accountability.

One of the most pressing issues is the lack of comprehensive international regulation. While some regional efforts, such as those led by the Council of Europe, have attempted to address the risks of AI in migration, there is still no binding global framework that clearly defines limits on surveillance technologies. This has allowed states to deploy high-risk systems with limited oversight, often prioritizing security over human rights protections (Council of Europe, 2025; Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, 2025). As a result, the use of AI in migration remains largely (and inconsistently) unregulated across different regions.



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Another major challenge is the use of discriminatory and high-risk AI systems. Evidence shows that governments increasingly rely on technologies such as predictive analytics, facial recognition, and automated risk assessment tools to monitor and control migrants. However, these systems can label migrants as “security threats” and restrict access to asylum or mobility, reinforcing patterns of discrimination and exclusion (Amnesty International, 2023; Amnesty International, 2024a). In many cases, these technologies do not eliminate bias but instead amplify existing inequalities, particularly affecting already marginalized groups (Amnesty International, 2023).

The issue of mass surveillance and data exploitation is also a key concern. Digital systems used in migration management collect vast amounts of sensitive personal data, including biometric information. These technologies enable continuous monitoring not only at borders but throughout migrants’ journeys, contributing to what has been described as a system of pervasive and disproportionate surveillance (Amnesty International, 2024a). In many cases, migrants are required to provide this data without meaningful consent, creating a clear imbalance of power between individuals and the state.

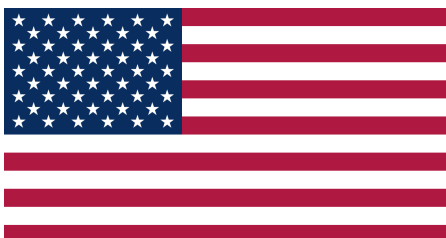
Additionally, there is a significant lack of transparency and accountability in how these technologies operate. Many AI systems function as “black boxes,” meaning their decision-making processes are not easily understood or explained. This makes it extremely difficult for migrants to challenge decisions such as visa denials, detention, or deportation, limiting access to due process and effective remedies

(Molnar, 2025; Yang et al., 2024). Without transparency, the risk of abuse and wrongful decisions increases significantly.

Another important challenge is the expansion of surveillance beyond physical borders, often referred to as “digital borders.” States now use technologies such as drones, biometric databases, and remote monitoring systems to control migration at multiple stages, including before individuals even reach a country’s territory. This form of control allows governments to restrict migration externally, raising concerns about violations of the right to seek asylum and the principle of non-refoulement (Amnesty International, 2024a; Amnesty International, 2023).

Finally, the widespread use of surveillance technologies has been linked to broader social consequences, including the “chilling effect.” When individuals know they are being constantly monitored, they may avoid accessing essential services, participating in society, or reporting abuses. This is particularly harmful for migrants, who are already in vulnerable situations, as it increases isolation and reduces access to protection mechanisms (Amnesty International, 2025).

Relevant Actors



United States: A global leader in surveillance infrastructure; plays a central role in shaping digital migration governance through large-scale biometric databases, inter-agency data sharing,

and partnerships with private technology companies. Its systems influence migration control practices across the Americas, particularly in regions affected by Venezuelan migration flows.



sufficient human rights safeguards.

China: Represents one of the most advanced models of state digital surveillance, utilizing AI, facial recognition, and mass data collection. Its technological model influences global standards and raises concerns about the expansion of state digital control without



raises concerns about privacy, transparency, and potential rights violations (Council of Europe, 2025; Molnar, 2025).

European Union: Key actor in AI-driven migration control through systems like the Entry/Exit System (EES) and broader “smart borders” initiatives. These rely on biometric data, facial recognition, and shared databases to monitor migration flows.

While aimed at improving security and efficiency, this approach



Venezuela: The origin of one of the largest displacement crises in the world, leading to the creation of large-scale digital registration and monitoring systems across Latin America. Migrants’ access

to rights such as healthcare, employment, and legal protection is often tied to their inclusion in these digital systems, illustrating how data has become a central tool of migration governance.



Colombia: Primary host country for Venezuelan migrants. Colombia has implemented extensive digital registration programs (such as temporary protection systems) to manage migration flows. While these systems aim to promote inclusion, they also demonstrate how state control increasingly operates through databases and digital identification.



India: India has implemented one of the world's largest biometric identification systems (Aadhaar), which has implications for migration governance, identity verification, and access to services. Its model highlights both the potential and risks of large-scale digital identity systems in regulating

populations.

Case Studies

Case Study 1: [From surveillance to automation: How AI tech is being used at European borders](#)

Context

The European Union has significantly expanded the use of digital technologies in migration management through systems such as the Entry/Exit System (EES) and other AI-supported border initiatives. These systems collect and process biometric and personal data, including fingerprints, facial images, and travel records, replacing traditional border control methods with automated and data-driven systems (European Commission, 2026).

Beyond EES, the EU has increasingly invested in AI-based surveillance and automation technologies across its borders. At least 12 EU member states are currently testing or implementing AI-powered systems to support migration control and asylum procedures (Desmarais, 2025). These technologies include:

- Facial recognition and biometric matching systems
- Automated language and dialect recognition to verify migrants' country of origin
- Behavioral analysis through CCTV and drones in border and detention areas
- AI-supported risk assessment tools in asylum decision-making
- Maritime and aerial surveillance systems, including drones and sensors

Key Issues

- **Mass Collection and Centralization of Data:** The large-scale collection of biometric and personal data raises concerns about privacy, long-term storage, and potential misuse of sensitive information (European Commission, 2026).

- **Expansion of Surveillance and Automation:** AI technologies extend migration control beyond physical borders into continuous monitoring systems, creating forms of permanent digital surveillance (Molnar, 2025).
- **Lack of Transparency and Accountability:** Many migrants are unaware that AI systems are being used in their cases and often have no ability to understand or challenge automated decisions, raising concerns about due process (Desmarais, 2025).
- **Risk of Bias and Experimental Use on Migrants:** Experts warn that migrants are effectively being used as “guinea pigs” for new technologies, meaning that errors, biases, and system failures disproportionately affect them (Desmarais, 2025).
- **Potential for Discrimination and Misidentification:** AI systems used in border control—such as dialect recognition and risk profiling, may produce inaccurate or biased outcomes, reinforcing institutionalized discrimination.

The Problematic

The European Union’s increasing reliance on AI and biometric surveillance reflects a transformation of migration governance into a system of automated, data-driven control. While these technologies aim to enhance efficiency and security, they also raise serious concerns regarding mass surveillance, lack of accountability, and the potential erosion of fundamental human rights, particularly for migrants who have limited ability to challenge or understand these systems (Molnar, 2025; Desmarais, 2025).



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Case Study 2: Digital Registration and Data-Driven Migration Governance in the Venezuelan Displacement Crisis

Context

The ongoing political, economic, and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela has led to the displacement of more than 7 million people, making it one of the largest migration crises in the world (UNHCR, 2024). The majority of Venezuelan migrants have moved to neighboring countries such as Colombia, Peru, and Brazil, where governments have faced increasing pressure to manage large-scale inflows.

In response, host states have implemented digital registration systems, biometric identification tools, and centralized migration databases. For example, Colombia's Temporary Protection Statute (ETPV) requires migrants to complete an online registration process in order to regularize their status and gain access to services. These measures reflect a broader shift toward data-driven migration governance, where digital systems play a central role in population management and border control (Molnar, 2025).

Key Issues

- **Conditional Access to Rights:** Access to services such as healthcare, education, and legal protection often depends on digital registration. Migrants who are unable to register risk exclusion, making rights conditional on digital recognition (UNHCR, 2024).

- **Data Privacy and Surveillance Risks:** Digital systems collect sensitive personal and biometric data. Without strong safeguards, this raises concerns about misuse, data sharing, and long-term surveillance (Molnar, 2025).
- **Digital Inequality:** Barriers such as limited internet access, lack of devices, and low digital literacy prevent many migrants from completing registration processes, reinforcing existing inequalities (Migration Policy Institute, 2004).
- **Expansion of Administrative Control:** Digital registration increases state capacity to monitor and regulate migrants, creating forms of “soft surveillance” beyond physical borders (Molnar, 2025).

The Problematic

The central issue in this case is the transformation of migration governance into a data-dependent system, where recognition as a rights-holder increasingly relies on digital visibility. While digital tools can improve efficiency and coordination, they also expand state capacity to monitor and control migrant populations. As a result, protection becomes conditional, and migrants who remain outside these systems risk invisibility and exclusion, raising important concerns about human dignity, autonomy, and the balance between state control and individual rights (Molnar, 2025).



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QARMAs

1. What kind of international framework or guidelines should regulate the use of AI and surveillance in migration governance?
2. How can states ensure secure, ethical, and limited use of biometric data collected from migrants?
3. What systems can be implemented to ensure transparency and accountability in AI-driven migration decisions?
4. How can governments identify and reduce bias in AI systems used for border control and migrant profiling?
5. Where should the line be drawn between legitimate border control and excessive digital surveillance?
6. What role should technology companies play in preventing human rights violations linked to their systems?
7. How can policies prevent digital exclusion, ensuring migrants are not denied rights due to lack of access to technology?



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Subtopic B: Dehumanization, Discrimination, and the Undermining of Migrant's Rights

Introduction and Contextualization

Migration is one of the most prominent issues of the 21st century, driven by national or international conflicts, climate change, economic inequality, and political instability, among other global issues. One of the main problems migrants face is the dehumanization



manifested through a complex cycle of social rhetoric, restrictive policies, and the use of migration as a political tool, covered by the premise of state sovereignty, which is a state right. However, this authority tends to clash with the obligation to uphold universal human rights.

Socially, migrants are often stripped of their dignity through language and harmful stereotypes. Migrants are catalogued as “criminals, aliens, robbers, rapists”, even being compared to animals. This dehumanization results in the loss of empathy, compassion, and consideration, denying others of their intrinsic human dignity. The dehumanizing language limits the solutions to social problems, pollutes



the debates, and desensitizes the public when witnessing aggression and violence (Crawford Ames, 2019)

. This rhetoric of dehumanization has been further spread in recent years for immediate political gain by far-right movements and leaders around the world, especially in

countries with high rates of immigration and refugees, framing them as threats to security and social identity (Refugees, Migrants Branded 'Threats', Dehumanized in Campaigns Seeking Political Gain, High Commissioner Tells Third Committee, Appealing for Return to Dignity | UN Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, 2018). Moreover, with social media hate speech is amplified, especially as "hot cognition" and "tribal epistemology" lead people to easily accept misinformation. "Hot cognition" refers to thinking predominantly influenced by emotion over reason and "tribal epistemology" is described as information being evaluated based on group loyalty over facts (Crawford Ames, 2019).

This dehumanization is not merely a social phenomenon but is increasingly codified through state policies that strip individuals of their legal standing, creating a condition of "rightlessness" (Crawford Ames, 2019). Governments often assert





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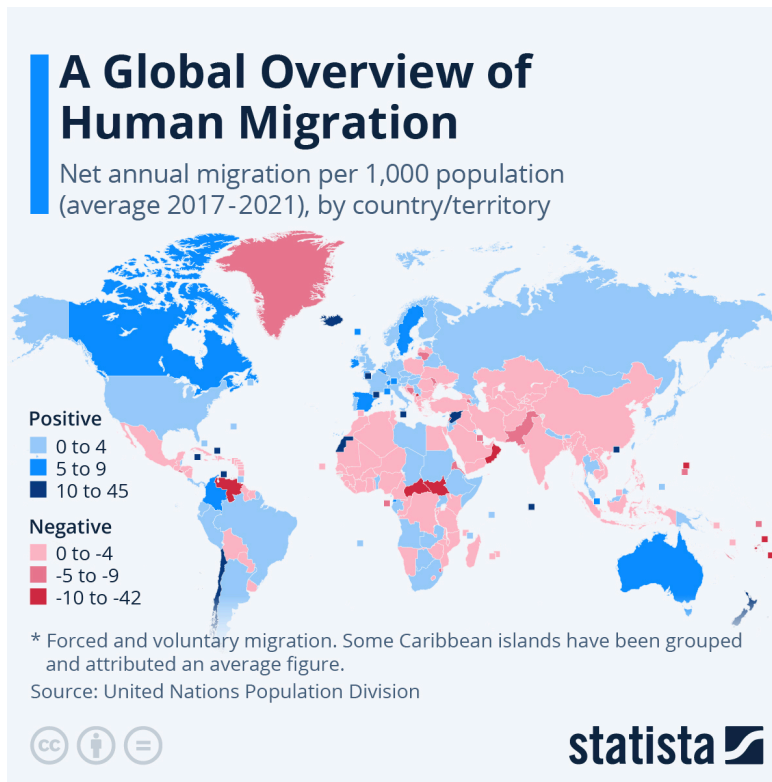


their sovereign rights to protect citizens as a justification to prioritize border control over the enforcement of universal human rights, effectively placing those seeking refuge in a legal limbo where their inherent worth is not recognized. This creates a "global color line" in international relations, where people from the Global South are systematically constructed as a threat to the Global North to justify their exclusion (Bohnet et al, 2024).

The physical manifestation of this rhetoric is most evident in rigid border management, which includes the criminalization of migration, the extensive use of mandatory detention, and the practice of "pushbacks". These measures often treat migrants as faceless groups to be deterred rather than individuals with protection needs, pushing them toward more dangerous routes and increasing the risk of enforced disappearances and death. In many cases, these enforcement actions involve the unjustified or dangerous use of force, leading to human rights violations for which no one is held accountable .

In the economic sphere, dehumanization persists within temporary labor programs, where workers are frequently reduced to mere economic tools, a reality summarized by the sentiment, "we wanted workers, but human beings came". These individuals are often subjected to unsanitary housing, forced separation from their families, and the surrender of fundamental rights, such as the right to worship, in exchange for a living wage. This exploitation is often enabled by the failure to separate rights protection from immigration control, which prevents workers from reporting abuse for fear of deportation (*New UN Report Warns Against 'Dehumanizing' Migrants Looking for Work*, 2022).

Ultimately, this cycle reinforces a binary system of representation that classifies the "other" as an existential threat to the host society's identity, prosperity, and security. By framing migration predominantly as a security crisis, states legitimize the erosion of the due process and dignity that international law requires be afforded to every person, regardless of their status (Bohnet et al, 2024).



Current Challenges

The main obstacle with migration and human rights is the conflict between the sovereign right of states to protect their border and the state's duty to uphold international law. States assert their sovereign right as a justification to prioritize national security over universal human right, resulting in the creation of



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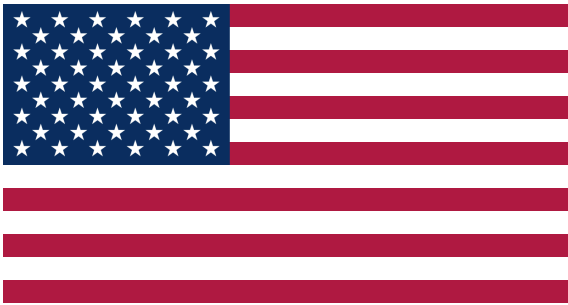
the state of “rightlessness” for migrants found in a limbo regarding state protection. This state of rightlessness often leads to criminalization resulting in mandatory or indefinite detention, pushing migrants towards more dangerous routes and “pushbacks” or returns to unsafe territories (Jänner,2024).

In the case of humanitarian vulnerability and exploitation, migrants are more susceptible to being victims due to their state of rightlessness. For instance, in many regions, migration management has devolved into a profit-driven model where migrants are victims of modern slavery, ransom extortion, and human trafficking. Moreover, woman and children tend to face “double discrimination” as they are more vulnerable and reports show higher rates of rape, sexual exploitation, and the use of children as “human pawns” (United Nations, 2026). In extreme cases migrants face unaccounted deaths and enforced disappearances. Over 35,000 migrants have died or disappeared since 2014, yet there is still a lack of centralized mechanism to document and keep track of the cases. Many lives are lost in transit zones, only discovered through mass graves with no one held accountable (United Nations, 2022).

This shows a massive institutional failure and several accountability gaps. There is the systematic failure to prosecute the state and non.state actors consistently involved in migrant abuse resulting in the ongoing culture where human rights violations are normalized along with governments consistently criminalizing and intervening with humanitarian actors and NGOs that provide aid to migrants. In addition many border and detention official fail to recognize the vulnerable populations, such as victims of torture or unaccompanied children, leading to further victimization in detention centers (Benito, 2020) .

Relevant Actors

Veto Powers



United States: Is a major destination actor currently considering and undergoing highly restrictive border measures, including a “Border Emergency Authority” to shut down the southern border and mandatory detention for arriving migrants. The United States, historically known as a “nation of immigrants” is currently framed for its dehumanizing rhetoric, cruelty, and violation of international human rights.



Russian Federation: Participates in debates regarding the political return of refugees and has been cited for military actions causing the massive displacement in Ukraine. Furthermore, it has faced scrutiny due to the mass expulsion of foreign nationals without due process.



China: Serves as a destination for individuals trafficked from neighboring countries and is requesting state in international extradition cases, providing diplomatic guarantees to ensure nationals do not face the death penalty.

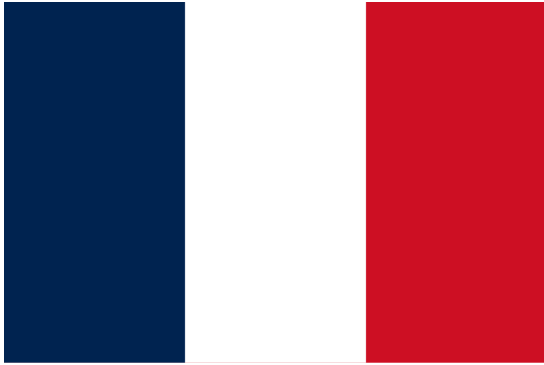


United Kingdom: Destination country where migrants face the risk of forced labor and exploitation in unsupervised and poorly regulated sectors. The country has also implemented legislation allowing the indefinite detention of migrants on national security grounds.



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France: Acts as an active host country and involved in landmark human right cases regarding the rights of asylum seekers and the prevention of forced returns to countries where migrants are at risk of torture.

Other Relevant Actors



Venezuela: The source of massive waves of migration (over 5.6 million people) due to the ongoing political and economic crisis characterized by the extreme lack of food and medical services.



Germany: Major host country experiencing the rise of extreme right-wing movements that use dehumanizing rhetoric to incite resentment against migrants and refugees.



México: Critical transit, origin, and host country. Has implemented “Beta Groups” to protect migrants and has defended its citizens right to consular notification in foreign legal proceedings. Mexico harbors most of the migrants from central america and has the critical frontier with the United States.



Turkey: The world's largest host of refugees (including 4 million Syrians), Turkey utilizes "migration diplomacy" as leverage in international negotiations, at times using the opening of borders as a political tool.



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Case Studies

Case Study 1: [Human Rights Violations and Abuses Against Migrants, Asylum-Seekers and Refugees in Libya](#)

Context

Libya is a major transit country on the Central Mediterranean route, which remains the deadliest route in the world, with numerous deaths recorded annually. Libya's governance of migrations is defined by Law No. 19 of 2010, which criminalizes the irregular stay, exit, and entry to the country, providing a legal basis for arbitrary detention without due process. The law states that those migrants in the country without regular status "shall be penalized by detention with hard labour or by a fine not exceeding 1,000 LYD" and further states that convicted foreigners should be expelled from Libyan territory upon the execution of the sentence. Although Libya has ratified numerous international human rights treaties, it does not participate in the 1951 Refugee Convention and lacks national legislation for victim protection and asylum (Human Rights Violations and Abuses Against Migrants, Asylum-Seekers and Refugees in Libya, 2026).

Key Issues



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- **Grave Violence:** Survivors recount widespread torture, sexual and gender-based violence, sexual assault, and enforced disappearances.
- **Arbitrary Detention:** Migrants are transferred to official, unofficial, or illegal facilities upon return, facing inhumane conditions including malnutrition, overcrowding, and lack of medical care.
- **Illegal and Dangerous Interceptions:** The Libyan Coast Guard (LCG) and other maritime actors carry out interceptions using hazardous maneuvers and live ammunition, forcibly returning individuals to a country the UN deems unsafe for disembarkation
- **Exploitative Business Model:** The Violations of human rights are heavily profit driven, involving extortion, the sale of migrants into forced labor, and “sexual servitude”

Systemic Failure Reflected

This crisis reflects deep structural weaknesses for both Libya and the international community as there is persistent overlap between state security actors and criminal networks. Often officials are found implicated in the exploitation of migrants, specially those without the legal state. Moreover, there is a clear lack of oversight as the security sector governance lacks transparency and civilian oversight; reshaping or renaming agencies has failed to produce efficient reforms. In terms of externalization policies, the European Union and its member states provide financial and technical support to Libyan entities for migration control, without taking into account the human rights risk safeguards or assessments.



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The Problematic

The core problem is the entrenchment of an "exploitative business model" where human rights violations have become "business as usual". This model is sustained by pervasive impunity, as very few criminal proceedings are initiated against perpetrators, and high-ranking officials subject to ICC warrants often remain at large. Furthermore, the classification of migrants as "illegal" and "threats" rather than rights-holders reinforces a cycle where individuals are trapped between dangerous sea crossings and a domestic environment of systemic discrimination and violence.

Case Study 2: [Migration Challenges in El Paso](#)

Context

The case is situated in the El Paso sector of the U.S.-Mexico border, a high-intensity zone for Department of Homeland Security (DHS) operations. This area is characterized by a landscape of intense surveillance, marked by watchtowers and physical barriers set against the desert terrain. The broader context involves the U.S. considering "Border Emergency Authority" to shut down the border and implementing mandatory detention for all arrivals, including children.

Key Issues



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- Militarization of the Border: The use of military-grade equipment, such as armored Stryker-style vehicles on the border hills, signals a shift from humanitarian processing to a military-style security operation.
- Dehumanization and Criminalization: Migrants are subjected to a "ruthless language" that brands them as "invaders" or "criminals". This is reflected visually in the harsh treatment of individuals in detention facilities, where they are often stripped of personal identifiers (such as having their heads shaved) and handled by masked guards.
- Restrictive Access to Asylum: The focus on "rigid border management" prioritizes deterrence and "pushbacks" over the legal right to seek protection [conversation history].

Systemic Failure

The systemic failure reflected in this case is the clash between state sovereignty and universal human rights. While the state asserts its sovereign right to control its borders, it does so by creating a state of "rightlessness" for migrants. This failure is manifested in:

- The separation of families and the detention of minors.
- A legal environment of pervasive impunity, where the physical and psychological aggression used by border authorities is justified under the premise of national security.

The Problematic

The core problem is the transformation of migration into a permanent "security crisis" [conversation history]. By framing migrants as existential threats to social identity and national safety, the system legitimizes the erosion of due process and human dignity [conversation history]. This "exploitative



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business model" treats human beings as objects to be "detected, deterred, and detained" rather than individuals with inherent rights, trapping them between dangerous transit routes and a host system that denies their humanity [1, conversation history].

QARMA_s

1. To what extent can states justify restrictive migration policies under the principle of national sovereignty without violating the fundamental human dignity of migrants?
2. How can the international community address and prevent the use of dehumanizing rhetoric that legitimizes discrimination against migrants and minorities?
3. What measures should be implemented to ensure that migration governance systems do not institutionalize discrimination based on race, nationality, or legal status?
4. How can states ensure humane conditions and due process within detention systems while maintaining border control and security?
5. What legal and policy frameworks are necessary to prevent the normalization of practices such as indefinite detention, pushbacks, and forced returns?
6. How can the rights of vulnerable migrant groups (such as women, children, and refugees) be better protected within current migration systems?
7. What mechanisms can be established to hold states and non-state actors accountable for human rights violations against migrants?

8. How can international cooperation be strengthened to balance migration management with the protection of human rights and dignity?
9. In what ways can migration policies be restructured to shift from a security-centered approach to a human rights-centered approach?
10. How can states prevent the exploitation of migrants in labor systems while ensuring access to basic rights and protections regardless of legal status?

Resources

- https://youtu.be/gAPdzH0_QhE?si=qvlu76Lr8eWHg1Sh
- https://youtu.be/e4X0hI40a8A?si=sP_9nZavsQHqOC2
- https://americangerman.institute/publication/the-dehumanization-of-immigrants-and-the-rise-of-the-extreme-right/?utm_source=perplexity
- <https://amnistia.org.mx/contenido/index.php/strongamnistia-internacional-expone-violaciones-de-derechos-humanos-en-centro-de-detencion-de-inmigrantes-de-el-paso-strong/>
- <https://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/recherche?typologie=carte+ou+graphique&s=migration>
- <https://www.oiip.ac.at/cms/media/zwischenraume-policy-brief-the-impact-of-migration-on-international-relations.pdf>



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- <https://www.onlinelibrary.iihl.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/2020-Corte-IDH-Cuadernillo-de-jurisprudencia-de-la-corte-interamericana-de-derechos-humanos-n%C2%BA-2-%E2%80%93-personas-en-situacio%CC%81n-de-migracio%CC%81n-o-refugio.pdf>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k6Ghe9qwqGI>
- <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/3f2f69e74.pdf>
- <https://library.fes.de/libalt/journals/swetsfulltext/17087754.pdf>

https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl2616/files/2018-07/DDGs_commentary_Protection_of_Migrants.pdf

Guiding Questions

1. To what extent should states be allowed to expand their use of digital surveillance and use of AI for migration governance before that surveillance and AI begins to violate human dignity?
2. To what extent does technology's role in border enforcement dehumanize migrants and minorities as a direct result of technology and how does technological border enforcement dehumanize migrants and minorities in an indirect manner?
3. Is it possible for digital surveillance systems to ever be truly neutral or do they inherently re-enforce already existing discrimination against marginalized groups?
4. How can states balance national security priorities, technological efficiencies and their duty to respect and protect fundamental human rights?

5. In what ways do the cultural narratives and political rhetoric that surround migration influence the justification and implementation of surveillance technologies?
6. Does the growing reliance on data-driven migration management reduce people to "risk profiles," and what are the implications of reducing people to risk profiles for human dignity?
7. What safeguards need to be put in place to ensure that advancements in technology do not normalize discriminatory conduct or violations of rights?
8. How can international law evolve to create regulations regarding the use of AI in migration and how can international law evolve to protect human rights of migrants at the same time?
9. To what extent does the framing of migration as a security issue justify states expanding their power at the expense of individual freedoms?
10. Who is accountable when the use of digital technologies and state policies result in violations of basic human rights of migrants?

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