



# ACSMUNC IV

## GA3: Social Humanitarian and Cultural

**Chairs:**

Stanimira Petrova  
Sophia Bobochikova

## **Letter from the Chairs**

Dear Delegates,

We are pleased to welcome you to the second edition of the ACSMUNC! This most glorious return of our conference has allowed us to chair GA3 for which we are wholly excited and truly grateful. It is always a tremendous pleasure to meet people with whom we share similar passions and interests, and so we are eager to meet and talk to all of you.

This year we have got quite the committee ahead of us. As fitting for the SOCHUM, the topics we are about to discuss are ones which will require you to not only be sharp, engaged, and creative in your approach, but also quite compassionate and thoughtful, as it is, after all, Human Rights and Culture that we are dealing with.

We hope you will enjoy your preparation, and we look forward to some amusing committee sessions.

With great anticipation,

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## **Background on the Combating Gender Based Violence**

### **What is Gender Based Violence?**

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a pervasive global issue, defined by the UN as encompassing acts that cause physical, mental, or sexual harm, along with threats, coercion, and other forms of deprivation of liberty. This phenomenon affects individuals irrespective of their race, socioeconomic status, or cultural background, with statistics indicating that one in every three women will experience GBV in her lifetime. Additionally, GBV is rooted in traditional attitudes that perpetuate the subordination of women to men, reinforcing gender stereotypes and roles that normalize violent or coercive practices within familial and societal settings. Examples include forced marriage, dowry-related deaths, acid attacks, and female genital mutilation (FGM). Despite concerted efforts to address GBV, it persists as a significant barrier to gender equality and human rights, necessitating comprehensive strategies that challenge entrenched social norms, promote gender equity, and ensure access to justice and support services for survivors.

### **History of the Issue**

The history of gender-based violence (GBV) is deeply intertwined with societal structures and power dynamics, spanning across cultures and historical epochs. Throughout history, GBV has been used as a tool to enforce gender norms, maintain patriarchal control, and subjugate women and marginalized genders. From ancient civilizations to modern societies, various forms of GBV, including physical, sexual,

psychological, and economic violence, have been prevalent. While some progress has been made in recognizing and addressing GBV, its roots remain deeply embedded in social, cultural, and economic structures, perpetuating cycles of violence and inequality. Understanding the historical context of GBV is crucial for informing contemporary efforts to combat it and striving towards a more equitable and just society.

## **The Situation Today**

Gender-based violence (GBV) persists as a widespread human rights violation, affecting approximately one in three women globally. Statistics from the World Bank reveal that 35% of women worldwide have experienced physical and/or intimate partner violence. Additionally, as many as 38% of murders of women are committed by intimate partners. Despite legislative efforts in 158 countries addressing domestic violence and sexual harassment, approximately 736 million women have endured intimate partner violence or non-partner violence at least once in their lives. The impact of GBV knows no boundaries, affecting women regardless of their location or socioeconomic status. Poverty, instability, and lack of education exacerbate the problem, particularly in developing nations, where approximately 700 million girls are forced into marriage before the age of 18, exposing them to further violence. At least 155 countries have passed laws on domestic violence, and 140 have legislation on sexual harassment in the workplace (World Bank 2020). But challenges remain in enforcing these laws, limiting women and girls' access to safety and justice. Not enough is done to prevent violence, and when it does occur, it often goes unpunished.

## **Actions Taken to Address the Issue**

Efforts to combat gender-based violence are supported by international agreements like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the 1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. Despite this, only 40 percent of women seek assistance following instances of violence, underscoring the need for accessible and high-quality services to ensure safety, protection, and recovery for women and girls, particularly those facing multiple forms of discrimination.

Collaborating with governments, UN agencies, civil society groups, and other stakeholders, initiatives focus on prevention through early education, fostering respectful relationships, and engaging men and boys. Prevention remains the most cost-effective and sustainable approach to ending violence. UN Women also emphasizes the importance of robust data collection and analysis to understand the scope and impact of violence against women and girls, informing effective strategies and interventions.

UN Women's initiatives such as Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces have addressed sexual harassment in public areas for over a decade, while its involvement in the Spotlight Initiative, with a budget of EUR 500 million, targets comprehensive interventions to end violence across regions including Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, and the Pacific. This comprehensive approach reflects UN Women's commitment to addressing the issue of gender-based violence through partnerships,

prevention strategies, data-driven insights, and targeted initiatives spanning various regions globally.

## **Country and Bloc Positions**

### **The Republic of South Africa**

In South Africa, the prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) stands among the highest globally, with one in five women in relationships having experienced physical violence by a partner. Despite the staggering rates, many cases of abuse remain unreported due to various factors, including inadequate training and insensitivity among law enforcement officers. Recognizing the urgency of addressing this issue, organizations like Ilitha Labantu have collaborated with UN Women and other partners to implement survivor-centered training programs for the South African Police Service (SAPS). These programs aim to enhance officers' understanding and response to GBV cases, fostering a supportive environment for survivors and promoting a whole-of-society approach to combating GBV in South Africa.

### **The French Republic**

France takes a comprehensive approach to combating gender-based violence, with robust national legislation criminalizing various forms of abuse against women. Domestic violence, including psychological, physical, and sexual abuse, is criminalized, as is stalking and female genital mutilation. The government regularly adopts action plans to reinforce the implementation of laws, doubling funding to combat violence. Initiatives address intimate partner violence, sexual harassment, and traditional harmful practices. Protection measures, such as emergency protection orders, provide legal recourse for victims of domestic violence.

Additionally, France ratified the Istanbul Convention, underscoring its commitment to preventing and combating violence against women on an international level. Through inter-ministerial missions and cooperation with relevant departments, France strives to create a supportive environment, promote gender equality, and protect the rights and dignity of women and girls.

## **United Mexican States**

The United Mexican states acknowledge the pressing issue of gender-based violence within its borders, evidenced by the alarming statistics of reported cases of femicides, which have seen a significant increase in recent years. Despite efforts to improve overall peacefulness in the country, rising levels of gender-based violence persist, with rates of family violence and sexual assault consistently escalating since 2015. The government recognizes the urgency of addressing this crisis, as highlighted by the substantial turnout of 90,000 women at the 2023 International Women's Day March in Mexico City, demanding action on the high levels of gender-based violence. With national survey data revealing that 70.1 percent of women have experienced some form of violence in their lifetimes, including nearly 40 percent from a partner, the United Mexican states are committed to implementing comprehensive measures to combat gender-based violence and ensure the safety and dignity of all individuals within its borders.

## **The Democratic Republic of Congo**

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) implemented a \$100 million GBV Prevention and Response Project to bolster participation in GBV prevention programs and enhance access to quality, multi-sectoral support services for survivors. Working through non-governmental and civil society organizations, the

project reached 7 million individuals, with 42,000 survivors receiving essential services, predominantly delivered at the community level, emphasizing a comprehensive approach to addressing GBV.

## **United States of America**

The USA is committed to tackling gender-based violence by boosting research, policies, and programs, with a keen focus on marginalized communities. This involves giving voice to marginalized groups in diplomatic talks, partnering with survivors to shape policies, and leading initiatives like the Trilateral Working Group on Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls. The USA ensures inclusivity across policies and services, following pledges made at the 2022 Global Disability Summit. Its programs target different life stages, emphasizing early intervention for youth and tailored support for older adults.

## **Conclusion**

The challenge of gender-based violence persists globally, undermining the rights and well-being of individuals and communities. Addressing this issue requires collective action and a comprehensive approach that encompasses prevention, protection, and support for survivors. As delegates gather to discuss this critical issue, let us examine the significance of combating gender-based violence and explore potential strategies for its eradication.

Please consider the following questions when preparing for the conference:

- What is the significance of addressing gender-based violence within the framework of international human rights and gender equality?



- What specific measures has your country implemented to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, both domestically and internationally?
- How does your country collaborate with other nations and organizations to combat gender-based violence on a global scale?
- What initiatives or campaigns has your country supported to raise awareness about gender-based violence and promote cultural shifts toward gender equality?
- What innovative solutions or policies does your delegation propose to effectively address gender-based violence and support survivors?

Delegates should keep in mind that this study guide is by no means exhaustive of the issue. It is simply the first step to be taken toward adequate preparation. To prepare sufficiently for the conference, delegates should further explore the topic and their nation's stance on the issue using the questions provided as a guide.

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# ACSMUNC II

## GA3: Social, Humanitarian and Cultural

**Chairs:**

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## **Background to Tackling the Opioid Overdose Epidemic**

### **Definition of Opioid Overdose Epidemic**

An opioid overdose epidemic refers to a widespread and escalating public health crisis characterized by the excessive and often fatal consumption of opioids, including both prescription medications and illicit substances like heroin and fentanyl. It involves a significant increase in the number of overdoses, leading to a substantial rise in mortality rates worldwide. This crisis is fueled by factors such as the proliferation of highly potent opioids, inadequate regulation of prescription practices, and the interplay of socioeconomic disparities. Addressing this epidemic requires multifaceted approaches, including enhanced access to addiction treatment, comprehensive harm reduction strategies, stricter regulation of opioid prescribing practices, and targeted interventions to address the root causes of opioid dependence and misuse.

### **Types of opioids**

Opioids, a class of drugs known for their potent pain-relieving properties, have become a pervasive issue in modern healthcare and society, contributing to a significant portion of substance abuse disorders and overdose deaths. Within this class, various types of opioids exist, including synthetic opioids like fentanyl, prescription pain relievers such as oxycodone and hydrocodone, natural derivatives like morphine and codeine, as well as the illicit drug heroin.

Types of opioids:

- Synthetic opioids - fentanyl;
- Prescription pain relievers - oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine, morphine;
- Illicit opioids - heroin;

## **Affected Groups**

The opioid overdose epidemic in the United States continues to exact a devastating toll, with the most affected groups spanning various demographics. Among these, the 35- to 44-year age group stands out as particularly vulnerable, witnessing a staggering 83% increase in opioid overdose deaths since 2019. Currently, this age bracket accounts for the highest number of opioid-related fatalities, reflecting a 5.4% increase from the preceding year. Moreover, while opioid deaths among females had been escalating rapidly, 2022 saw a stabilization in their numbers, contrasting with a 3% rise in male deaths. However, it remains concerning that seven out of 10 opioid overdose victims are male, underscoring the disproportionate impact on this demographic. These statistics highlight not only the tragic loss of life but also the profound economic burden, with estimates reaching \$150 billion in 2017, along with non-economic costs totaling \$871 billion. As the opioid crisis persists, addressing the needs of these vulnerable populations through comprehensive prevention, treatment, and support initiatives remains imperative to mitigate its devastating consequences.

## **Risk Factors for Opioid Overdose**

Opioid overdose risk factors encompass a range of conditions and behaviors, with opioid use disorder, injection drug use, and unsupervised prescription opioid

consumption being prominent contributors. High prescribed doses exceeding 100 mg of morphine equivalent daily heightened vulnerability, as does the combination of opioids with other respiratory-depressant substances like alcohol or benzodiazepines. Concurrent medical conditions such as HIV, liver or lung diseases, and mental health disorders amplify risks, alongside a history of previous overdoses. Notably, males, older individuals, and those with lower socio-economic status face elevated susceptibility. Changes in tolerance after periods of abstinence or fluctuations in drug supply also increase the likelihood of overdose, as does mixing opioids with stimulants like cocaine or methamphetamine. These multifaceted risk factors underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions and comprehensive prevention strategies to curb the escalating toll of opioid overdoses.

### **Preventive measures:**

To tackle the opioid overdose pandemic, nations and governments must adopt a multifaceted strategy. This includes educating the public about the risks of opioid use, enhancing regulations on prescription opioids, and expanding access to evidence-based treatments such as medication-assisted therapy. Harm reduction initiatives like naloxone distribution and safe injection sites can prevent fatal overdoses, while law enforcement efforts target illegal opioid trafficking. Addressing underlying socioeconomic factors is crucial, as poverty and lack of access to healthcare contribute to addiction. Collaboration among stakeholders is essential for the effective implementation of comprehensive strategies to combat the opioid crisis.

## **Possible progression of the epidemic**

The opioid epidemic, predominantly witnessed in the United States, raises concerns about its potential replication in other nations. As countries grapple with the devastating impact of opioid misuse across American communities, there's a growing awareness of the need for stringent regulation and heightened vigilance. The shift towards illicit opioids like heroin or fentanyl, coupled with the globalization of the drug trade, poses a significant risk of similar challenges emerging worldwide. Factors such as socioeconomic disparities, cultural attitudes towards drug use, and the accessibility of healthcare systems further amplify this risk. However, international cooperation, public health interventions, and prevention efforts offer avenues to stem the tide. By learning from the US experience and implementing proactive measures, countries can mitigate the potential spread of opioid abuse beyond American borders, safeguarding global communities from the grips of a similar crisis.

## **Country and Bloc Positions**

### **The United States of America**

The opioid overdose epidemic in the United States has reached staggering proportions, claiming the lives of more than 42,000 individuals in 2016 alone. With over 11.4 million Americans misusing prescription opioids, and more than 130

succumbing to opioid-related deaths each day, the crisis has emerged as a paramount public health challenge. Contributing factors include the phenomenon of "deaths of despair," spurred by economic downturns, and the proliferation of illicit opioids, facilitated by failed policies and overseas production. Big Pharma's aggressive promotion of prescription opioids, marked by deceptive practices and lobbying efforts, has further exacerbated the crisis. Regulatory oversights at the federal level, exemplified by laws weakening DEA authority, have also played a role. While Texas has thus far experienced lower rates of opioid-related incidents, warnings abound that the epidemic could soon permeate local communities, necessitating proactive measures to prevent its escalation and safeguard lives.

## **The Dominion of Canada**

The opioid overdose epidemic in Canada has become a dire public health crisis, claiming over 30,000 lives since 2016, surpassing other accidental death causes combined. Despite initially triggering provincial health emergencies, recent media and political attention have dwindled, obscuring the ongoing severity. Recent data reveals a grim reality, with 3,556 opioid-related deaths in the first half of 2022, mirroring 2021's alarming toll. The crisis has evolved through different 'waves,' shifting from prescription opioids to potent synthetic variants like fentanyl, increasingly compounded by poly-drug use involving stimulants and benzodiazepines. Interventions, mainly focusing on treatment and naloxone distribution, have struggled to contain the crisis, exacerbated by fragmented responses and insufficient prevention measures. Bold actions, including safer opioid supply programs and experimental decriminalization initiatives, offer potential avenues for mitigation. Yet, without comprehensive, proactive strategies addressing



the root causes of overdose deaths, the crisis is poised to persist, demanding urgent governmental action.

## **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

In the UK, despite a slight decline in opioid consumption since 2016, recent research reveals that the country holds the dubious distinction of having the highest consumption rate of prescription opioids for pain management per capita globally. Driven primarily by substances such as tramadol, codeine, buprenorphine, and tapentadol, which are not regulated by the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the UK's opioid use has reached alarming levels. While the nation's well-established pain and palliative care services may partially explain this phenomenon, concerns persist regarding the high addictive potential of these drugs. As pharmaceutical companies look to expand into new markets, including those in South America, India, and South Africa, there's a pressing need for vigilant drug controls to prevent the replication of the opioid crisis witnessed elsewhere.

## **Republic of Korea**

South Korea has taken proactive measures to combat opioid misuse and abuse, notably introducing the world's first narcotic management system, the Narcotics Information Management System (NIMS). Recent research delved into opioid prescribing patterns in South Korea, utilizing the comprehensive NIMS database for the year 2022. Analysis revealed a stable overall quantity of prescribed opioid analgesic units, with oral oxycodone being the most prescribed ingredient, followed by tapentadol and sublingual fentanyl. Tertiary hospitals emerged as the primary dispensing institutions, particularly for male patients in their 60s. Despite these

findings, disposal rates for oral and transdermal formulations remained low, underscoring the importance of sustained education and surveillance among patients and healthcare providers to address opioid prescription patterns effectively.

## **Conclusion**

The opioid overdose epidemic stands as a harrowing testament to the complexities of modern healthcare and societal challenges. From the insidious proliferation of highly potent synthetic opioids like fentanyl to the pervasive influence of pharmaceutical marketing practices, the crisis demands a multifaceted response. Bold initiatives such as safer opioid supply programs and experimental decriminalization efforts offer glimmers of hope amid the despair. Yet, as the crisis transcends borders, nations must unite in vigilance, learning from each other's successes and failures to craft holistic solutions. Ultimately, the battle against opioid overdose requires not just medical interventions but a societal reckoning with addiction, pain management, and the very fabric of our healthcare systems.

Before continuing further, we would like to ask all delegates to carefully look at the facts, and consider the following questions:

- What are, if any, the legislations in your country?
- What has your country done to address the issue?
- What are possible solutions to the issue?

This study guide is by no means exhaustive on the issue of the opioid overdose epidemic, and we highly suggest that all delegates should research the topic further and their nation stances and likely actions. We would like you to consider what impact this issue has on your country, and what impact does your country have on the issue.

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