



**Commission on Crime Prevention  
and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ)  
Chair Letter**

## **DEAR DELEGATES,**

Welcome to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) at CNYMUN 2026! It works directly to support and create international cooperation and equality in combating crime. We are looking forward to interesting and inclusive debate. Your chairs this year will be Nora Teelin and Avery Howe.

## **ABOUT THE CHAIRS:**

Avery is a Senior at Fayetteville-Manlius Highschool. This is her fourth year of MUN and her first year as a chair. Outside of MUN, you can find her travelling the country playing softball all year round. She loves hanging out with her friends and being involved with her local church and youth group.

Nora Teelin is a junior at Fayetteville Manlius High School. This year is her third year in MUN and her first time chairing. Outside of MUN she is a part of the FM crew team and the SHS. She loves traveling, volunteering with animals, and hanging out with her friends.

## **ABOUT THE COMMITTEE:**

Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) is a part of the United Nations Economic and Social Council and is used to build strategies for crime prevention and creating criminal justice systems. Founded in 1955, this committee highlights the usage of artificial intelligence correlated to crime, cyber security, the rights of offenders and victims, and costs of corruption. It works directly to support the international cooperation to combat crime. It is crucial in creating a safe, secure world and in promoting equal representation in our justice system and worldwide equity.

Your topics for the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) will be:

1. Enhancing Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programs within Correctional Systems
2. Combatting the Power of Drug Cartels in Central and South America

## **ABOUT THE CONFERENCE:**

Keeping in line with CNYMUN tradition, all committees will follow Harvard style debate, meaning delegates are prohibited from using pre-written clauses and/or resolutions during committee. Doing so will make a delegate ineligible for awards. To be eligible for awards, delegates must submit a Georgetown style position paper per each topic, meaning that each topic should be one page, single spaced, with a font size of 12 in Times New Roman. Position papers should outline the stance of your delegation and demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of your topics. The use of AI is prohibited and will result in disqualification from awards. When deciding on awards, chairs will look favorably upon delegates who have put significant effort into preparation prior to the conference, collaborate with other delegates without being overbearing, remain within the bounds of their nation's policies, and encourage other's voices to be heard. CNYMUN committees are structured using a tiered structure, designating each committee as open, intermediate, or advanced. CCPCJ is designated as an **open** committee. In turn, the Best New Delegate award will be offered to a first-time delegate in this committee.

Please share position papers prior to the start of the conference. The chairs' emails are listed below for you to contact about any research, position paper, or committee inquiries. It is recommended that all delegates share their position papers to both chair's emails, although chairs will ask for any hard copies of position papers at the start of committee session one if necessary.

We encourage you to scan our delegate preparation resources and award structure on [www.cnymun.org](http://www.cnymun.org). We wish you the best of luck and can't wait to see what you bring to CNYMUN 2026!

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## TOPIC 1: ENHANCING REHABILITATION PROGRAMS WITHIN CORRECTIONAL SYSTEMS

Worldwide, over 60% of prisons face overcrowding, with one in four countries running prisons at over 150% capacity.<sup>1</sup> This causes increased violence, inadequate healthcare, and inadequate nutrition for prisoners. Furthermore, incarceration rates continue to rise. Overcrowding leads to increased rates of recidivism, which refers to the reincarceration of individuals one or more times after initial offence, and evidence shows that the less humane prison conditions are, the harder reintegration becomes. Studies by the Council on Criminal Justice show that over 45% of the people released in 2012 had returned to jail by 2017.<sup>2</sup> High rates of overcrowding and recidivism highlight the need for enhancing our correctional systems.

Historically, prisons and correctional systems haven't had rehabilitation and reintegration programs; the focus of prisons was to punish. However, in the 20th century, there started to be a push for correctional systems to include rehabilitation and reintegration. The United States Correctional System represents this trend; throughout the 20th century the United States prisons focused on reintegration. After sentencing, decisions about prisoners' future and release were almost entirely in the hands of correctional officers and parole boards.<sup>3</sup> This allowed for more personalized and therefore helpful sentences. People were released when they were rehabilitated. In the 1960s, both the Law Enforcement Assistance Act and the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act were passed to increase rehabilitation and reintegration. Every prisoner had access to education and vocational training, adequate supervision after release, etc. However, starting in the 1970s people

started to question the order of this correctional system. Some people saw it as a threat to social order and called for a war on crime. By the start of the 21st century rehabilitation had taken a back seat to punishment.<sup>4</sup>

Today, there continue to be many arguments against efforts towards rehabilitation and reintegration. One common claim is that rehabilitation is impossible and therefore a waste of resources, since it will have no meaningful effect. Another argument is that it goes against the principles of justice, suggesting that rehabilitation will depreciate the sentencing and repercussions of serious crimes.<sup>5</sup> Ultimately compromising social justice and order. Many argue that it costs too much. Most methods of rehabilitation and reintegration-including parole boards, education and vocational training, and therapeutic programs-are expensive. Prisons are already a huge expense for many countries. El Salvador, for example, spends 200 million dollars on their prison system every year, even before the implementation of any rehabilitation programs.<sup>6</sup> Even if it will pay off in the long run, many countries don't have the resources to increase already inflated correctional budgets.

There are also many claims to support an increase in rehabilitation and reintegration programs. There is much evidence to suggest that prison systems as they are end up decreasing incarcerated people's social, mental, and physical health. One study done by Stanford in 1971 showed the effects similar conditions to real prisons had on regular college students. While the experiment was not conducted in a real prison or with real guards, the living conditions, rules, and practices were all based on the American prison system. Within days most "prisoners" showed signs of mental distress and

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<sup>1</sup>"Global prison population and trends A focus on rehabilitative environments." *United Nations*, July 2025, [www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/prison/Prison\\_brief\\_2025.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/prison/Prison_brief_2025.pdf). Accessed 22 Aug. 2025.

<sup>2</sup> "Recidivism Rates: What You Need to Know." *Council on Criminal Justice*, 2025, [counciloncj.org/recidivism\\_report/](http://counciloncj.org/recidivism_report/). Accessed 22 Aug. 2025.

<sup>3</sup> Mackenzie, Doris Layton. "Sentencing and Corrections in the 21st Century: Setting the Stage for the Future." *Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice University of Maryland College Park, MD*, [www.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh241/files/archives/ncjrs/189106-2.pdf](http://www.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh241/files/archives/ncjrs/189106-2.pdf). Accessed 22 Aug. 2025.

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<sup>4</sup> Benson, E. S. (2003, July 1). Rehabilitate or punish? *Monitor on Psychology*, 34(7).<https://www.apa.org/monitor/julaug03/rehab>

<sup>5</sup>Weatherburn. "Seven Arguments Against Rehabilitation - An Assessment of Their Validity." *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, vol. 15, no. 1, [www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/seven-arguments-against-rehabilitation-assessment-their-validity](http://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/seven-arguments-against-rehabilitation-assessment-their-validity). Accessed 22 Aug. 2025.

<sup>6</sup> Rios, Michael. "What we know about the El Salvador 'mega prison' where Trump is sending alleged Venezuelan gang members." *CNN World*, Mar. 2025, [www.cnn.com/2025/03/17/americas/el-salvador-prison-trump-deportations-gangs-intl-latam](http://www.cnn.com/2025/03/17/americas/el-salvador-prison-trump-deportations-gangs-intl-latam). Accessed 22 Aug. 2025.

disobedience.<sup>7</sup> Many studies also find the benefits outweighed the costs of rehabilitation programs in the long run. A study done by The University of Massachusetts found favorable benefit to cost ratios in 13 out of 14 studies done across the United States and Great Britain.<sup>8</sup>

Considering how complicated the issue of rehabilitation is, the UN has some guidelines in place to protect prisoners from inhumane prison conditions, and guide countries in improving their correctional systems. An example of this is the Nelson Mandela Rules. Adopted in 1955 and revised in 2015 the Nelson Mandela rules, or the United Nations Standard for Minimum Treatment of Prisoners, are a set of rules that outline a standard for how prisoners should be treated.<sup>9</sup> Rule 92 considers rehabilitation and reintegration. It encourages implementing education, vocational training, social casework, employment counselling, physical development and strengthening of moral character wherever it is possible.<sup>10</sup> While this is a minimum standard, the United Nations recognize how economic and social conditions can limit nations ability to implement them

Despite guidelines in many countries, prison systems are on the brink of collapse. El Salvador, for example, has the highest number of incarcerated people in the world, with 1,560 out of 100,000 people being incarcerated.<sup>11</sup> This extremely high

incarceration rate is due to the government's crackdown on gang violence in 2022, The president Nayib Bukele led a campaign to stop the gangs that once controlled El Salvador, making many communities safer.<sup>12</sup> However, in the process more than 80,000 people were put in jail, without due process. El Salvador isn't the only country that struggles with high incarceration rates. Cuba, Rwanda, Turkmenistan, and The United States are the countries with the top five incarceration rates behind El Salvador. All these countries focus on punishment as opposed to rehabilitation.

On the other hand countries like Norway have found success with rehabilitation and reintegration decreasing recidivism. Norway's prisons are not designed to punish, but instead advertise that they are designed to create good neighbors.<sup>13</sup> They focus on humanity, normality, and reintegration instead of punishment and restriction. They see taking away someone's liberty and the separation from one's family and community to be punishment enough. As a result Norway has one of the lowest incarceration rates per capita in the world at only 60 out of 100,000 being incarcerated.<sup>14</sup>

While success is found when rehabilitation is put on the forefront this is difficult to do. The most common solutions are: creating safer and cleaner prison environments, therapeutic programs, education, vocational training, and parole boards. While all of these options seem to be very effective in the long run, all are extremely controversial and expensive, especially for prisons with extensive populations.

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<sup>7</sup> Stanford. "The Story: An Overview of the Experiment." *Stanford Prison Experiment*, [www.prisonexp.org/the-story](http://www.prisonexp.org/the-story). Accessed 22 Aug. 2025.

<sup>8</sup> Welsh, Brandon C. "Monetary Costs and Benefits of Correctional Treatment Programs: Implications for Offender Reentry." *Federal Probation*, [www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/68\\_2\\_3\\_0.pdf](http://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/68_2_3_0.pdf). Accessed 22 Aug. 2025.

<sup>9</sup> "Nelson Mandela International Day 18 July." *United Nations*, [www.un.org/en/events/mandeladay/mandela\\_rules.shtml#:~:text=In%20December%202015%2C%20the%20UN,of%20a%20culture%20of%20peace](http://www.un.org/en/events/mandeladay/mandela_rules.shtml#:~:text=In%20December%202015%2C%20the%20UN,of%20a%20culture%20of%20peace). Accessed 22 Aug. 2025.

<sup>10</sup> "The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules)." *United Nations Office on Drug and Crime*, [www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Nelson\\_Mandela\\_Rules-E-ebook.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Nelson_Mandela_Rules-E-ebook.pdf). Accessed 22 Aug. 2025.

<sup>11</sup> "Countries with the largest number of prisoners per 100,000 of the national population, as of February 2025." *Statista*, Feb. 2025, [www.statista.com/statistics/262962/countries-with-the-most-prisoners-per-100-000-in-habitants/](http://www.statista.com/statistics/262962/countries-with-the-most-prisoners-per-100-000-in-habitants/) Accessed 22 Aug. 2025.

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<sup>12</sup> "Inmates face brutal conditions in El Salvador prison." *Youtube*, Apr. 2025, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=RILES-KaVDs&t=2s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RILES-KaVDs&t=2s). Accessed 22 Aug. 2025.

<sup>13</sup> "How Norway turns criminals into good neighbours." *BBC*, [www.bbc.com/news/Stories-48885846](http://www.bbc.com/news/Stories-48885846).

<sup>14</sup> "How Norway's Prisons Are Different From America's." *Youtube*, 2020, [www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com). Accessed 22 Aug. 2025.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. How should prisons and reintegration systems deal with numbers of people that exceed resources?
2. Should the goal of correctional systems be rehabilitation or punishment? How do you balance the two?
3. How can reintegration systems prevent recidivism? What are the most effective rehabilitation methods?

## HELPFUL SOURCES:

Countries with the largest number of prisoners per 100,000 of the national population, as of February 2025

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/262962/countries-with-the-most-prisoners-per-100-000-inhabitants/>

Rehabilitation and social reintegration of prisoners

<https://www.unodc.org/dohadeclaration/topics/prisoner-rehabilitation.html#:~:text=Promoting%20prison%2Dbased%20rehabilitation%20programmes,thus%20reducing%20chances%20of%20recidivism.>

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules)

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Nelson\\_Mandela\\_Rules-E-ebook.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Nelson_Mandela_Rules-E-ebook.pdf)

How Norway turns criminals into good neighbours

<https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-48885846>

Sentencing and Corrections in the 21st Century: Setting the Stage for the Future

<https://www.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh241/files/archives/ncjrs/189106-2.pdf>

## TOPIC 2: COMBATTING THE POWER OF DRUG CARTELS IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA

Drug cartels are extremely organized criminal groups that control the production, trafficking and distribution of illegal drugs. They have shaped the modern history of Central and South America, politically and socially. Many cartels are transnational, crossing borders with many corrupt officials, local gangs, and international smugglers. Cartel dominated areas collapse justice systems. Drug related crimes go unpunished either due to corruption or under intimidation. This leads to an untrustworthy authority and justice system. In jail or prison, rehabilitation is often made impossible in heavily populated drug cartel areas due to gang control.

Bribery and intimidation of police officials, judges, military, and politicians lead to an extremely corrupted state. Weak and underfunded governments are at risk of being infiltrated by powerful cartels.

Corrupted governments lead to excessive monopolistic practices by cartels in those areas. Over time, countries like Honduras and Guatemala have developed entire political campaigns funded by drug traffickers. Cartels are a major source of violence against the state, the government, officials, and each other, leading to mass killings, kidnappings, and torture. In Mexico over 400,000 people have been murdered since 2006 in cartel related violence.<sup>15</sup> Now, since 2007, Central American countries have gained control of more than three times the amount of cocaine that Mexico acquired. Averaging approximately 100 metric tons per year.

Cartels utilize Extreme terror tactics to control communities and send “warnings” to officials and the state. Communities under cartel control are accustomed to curfews, “taxes” and forced recruitment. Children are used as lookouts, child assassins (sicarios) or mules. This leads to many fleeing and directly results in mass migration especially from Central America’s “Northern Triangle”.

By the late 1970s, Columbia became the epicenter of

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<sup>15</sup> Vanda Felbab-Brown, *Paying Attention to Central Americas Drug-Trafficking Crisis* (Brookings Institution, 2011), [www.brookings.edu/articles/paying-attention-to-central-americas-drug-trafficking-crisis/](http://www.brookings.edu/articles/paying-attention-to-central-americas-drug-trafficking-crisis/)

the global cocaine trade.<sup>16</sup> Cartels such as the Medellín Cartel and the Cali Cartel were infiltrated through high ranking corrupted officials. Using violence, and smuggling networks, they amassed immense wealth, and destabilized Colombian politics.

Today, multiple cartel corrupted countries are taking steps to compressing this violence through laws and regulations. Recently, Mexico reformed its Federal Economic Competition Law through a partnership with the United States, which is awaiting implementation as of August 2025.<sup>17</sup> This reform is expected to increase penalties and includes creating a new competition authority. While Mexican law prohibits specific cartel behaviors, enforcement has been mainly administrative. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has also been pushing stricter enforcement on laws and regulations in an effort to strengthen investigations revolving cocaine smuggling. The United States has also utilized the US department of state to recognize many threatening cartel groups as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs). This allows not only these groups to be prosecuted, but those supplying materials or financial support in an effort to reduce the number of cartels.

The strong demand for illegal drugs is fueling the cartel issue that corrupts these countries today. The International Crisis Group is working with vulnerable countries in this situation to promote social policies. Doing this can help limit exposure from women and children and limit women involvement in the spread of violent cartel groups. Additionally, they are actively pushing for an increase of international involvement and aid to support the extreme regulation and security needed to control cartel controlled states. While the demand for illegal drugs

increases everyday, the socioeconomics of Central and South America allow for rapid cartel growth and control. In Columbia, a farmer can earn 4 times more from coca cultivation then traditional crops such as coffee or maize. In Peru, coca leaf prices can bring farmers 10 times more per hectare than legal crops. Poor rural communities depend on illicit crops because they provide more returns than legal alternatives. Cartels exploit impoverished farmers by providing seeds, credit and guaranteeing a steady customer for a steady income, support that poor farmers often don't receive from governments or legal markets. Cartels turn poverty into dependence, without stronger rural development, infrastructure, and protection from violence, farmers are trapped in the cartel economy.

Geopolitical changes also play a key role in the expansion of drug cartels. In the 1980s, the United States increased security in the caribbean to shift cartel routes through Central America.<sup>18</sup> Today, 90% of cocaine moving to the U.S. passes through Mexico and Central America, and in Guatemala nearly 40% of murderers are tied to drug trafficking, showing how violence grows in areas where governments are weak.<sup>19</sup> When U.S. aid programs like *Plan Colombia* reduced coca growing in some areas, farmers replanted in new areas to continue the cycle. By 2017 coca crops had grown back to over 200,000 hectares, proving how much control cartels had by their ability to quickly adjust whenever international policies change.<sup>20</sup>

Political instability is another facet that gives cartels opportunities to operate in certain areas.<sup>21</sup> In Venezuela, weak governance turned the country into a hub for cartel activity.<sup>22</sup> Between 2006 and 2008,

<sup>16</sup> InSight Crime. "The Medellín Cartel" *InSight Crime*, 30 Aug. 2021  
<https://insightcrime.org/colombia-organized-crime-news/medellin-cartel/>

<sup>17</sup> GCR. "Mexico: sweeping reforms reshape antitrust regime with new authority and tougher penalties" 11 August 2025  
<https://globalcompetitionreview.com/review/the-antitrust-review-of-the-americas/2026/article/mexico-sweeping-reforms-reshape-antitrust-regime-new-authority-and-tougher-penalties#:~:text=Higher%20maximum%20fines%20for%20substantive,of%20engaging%20in%20anticompetitive%20behaviour.>

<sup>18</sup> Insight Crime. "Map of Mexican Cartel Presence in Central America" *Insight Crime*, 28 May 2012,  
[insightcrime.org/news/analysis/map-of-mexican-cartel-presence-in-central-america/](https://insightcrime.org/news/analysis/map-of-mexican-cartel-presence-in-central-america/).

<sup>19</sup> Brookings Institution. *Paying Attention to Central Americas Drug-Trafficking Crisis*. Brookings, 2011,  
[www.brookings.edu/articles/paying-attention-to-central-americas-drug-trafficking-crisis/](http://www.brookings.edu/articles/paying-attention-to-central-americas-drug-trafficking-crisis/).

<sup>20</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). *Columbia: Coca Cultivation Survey 2017*. UNODC, 2018,  
[www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Columbia/Columbia\\_Coca\\_Cultivation\\_Survey\\_2017.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Columbia/Columbia_Coca_Cultivation_Survey_2017.pdf).

<sup>21</sup> "Illegal Trade in Venezuela." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation,  
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illegal\\_drug\\_trade\\_in\\_Venezuela](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illegal_drug_trade_in_Venezuela).

<sup>22</sup> Goodman, Joshua. "In Ecuador, the Global Reach of Mexico's Warring Drug Cartels Fuels a National Crisis." *Associated Press*, 2



half of Europe's cocaine came from shipments that passed through Venezuela. Ecuador has recently developed into another hot spot, with reports that 70% of the world's cocaine now passes through the country, supplying one third of Europe's demand. In Brazil, the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) controls over 50% of cocaine exports to Europe.<sup>23</sup> These countries play a vital role in the growth and expansion of power for cartels.<sup>24</sup> When governments shift, change alliances, or weaken drug cartels take advantage to grow bigger, stronger, and expand their control.

Drug Cartels not only create social and political problems, but also cause serious environmental issues across Central and South America.

Narco-Deforestation is when forests are cut down to help drug trafficking operations or to hide illegal money through cattle ranching and farming. In countries like Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua, research shows that drug trafficking is behind as much as 30-60% of all deforestation in certain regions because cartels clear land for airstrips, roads, or cattle pastures to launder profits.<sup>25</sup> In Guatemala's Maya Biosphere Reserve, almost half of the forest loss between 2000 and 2010 was linked to ranching connected or owned by cartels, destroying one of the most important conservation areas in Central America.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, in Honduras, deforestation rates in trafficking hotspots increased over 8% per year compared to non trafficking zone, showing a direct connection between cartel activity and accelerated forest destruction.<sup>27</sup>

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. What socio-economic factors contribute to

May 2023,  
apnews.com/article.2b82e62999b2696e70bd0f6ce933026f.

<sup>23</sup> "Primeiro Comando da Capital" *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/primeiro\_Comando\_da\_Capital.

<sup>24</sup> "Primeiro Comando da Capital" *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/primeiro\_Comando\_da\_Capital.

<sup>25</sup> McSweeney, Kendra, et al. "Drug Policy as Conservation Policy: Narco-Deforestation." *Science* vol.343, no. 6170, 2014, pp. 489-490.

<sup>26</sup> Devine, Jennifer, et al. "Narco-Cattle Ranching in Guatemala's Maya Biosphere Reserve." *Land Use Policy*, vol. 81, 2019, pp. 438-446.

<sup>27</sup> McSweeney, Kendra, et al. "Drug Policy as Conservation Policy: Narco-Deforestation." *Science* vol.343, no. 6170, 2014, pp. 489-490.

cartel recruitment?

2. How do cartels impact regional governance and stability?
3. What strategies can reduce cartel influence on local communities?
4. How can international cooperation enhance anti-cartel efforts?

## HELPFUL SOURCES:

"Drug Trafficking, Violence, and Instability"

[https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/0419\\_drugs\\_instability\\_felbabbrown.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/0419_drugs_instability_felbabbrown.pdf)

The Cartel Project

<https://www.occrp.org/en/organizations/the-cartel-project/page/1>

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

[www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Columbia/](http://www.unodc.org/documents/crop-monitoring/Columbia/)