

World

# ‘Get rid of the low status people’: Shocking twists at IPYLC 2019



The scene at General Assembly 1, the delegate of China motioning for an unmoderated caucus. (Sophia Tan/Washington Post)

By [Andrew Phillip Lim](#) and [Aron Septianto](#)  
July 15 at 13:23

The Integrated Programme Youth Leadership Conference (IPYLC) today started strong, with a keynote address delivered by Guest-of-Honour Mr Christopher Ong. A senior executive of logistics giant DHL, Mr Ong discussed the far-reaching impacts of globalisation today, before the delegates broke off into their respective councils, numbering eight in total.

The crisis in Venezuela took centre stage in General Assembly 1, with multiple delegations supporting the idea of providing financial and monetary aid in order to stabilise the South American country's rapidly collapsing economy.

The American delegate's mention of possible military intervention, however, drew much flak and furor, with the delegate of Venezuela denouncing the US and drawing analogies to past US interference in her Latin American neighbours' affairs, such as the 1989 invasion of Panama which 'left hundreds of civilians dead'.

US allies Egypt and the UAE were alone in their approval, as delegates from Germany, China, the UK and more called for a peaceful handling of the crisis.



Focus soon turned to the political arena, with the dispute between de facto leader Nicolás Maduro and legislature-backed opposition Juan Guaidó becoming a divisive point of contention.

Delegates from Brazil, Italy, the Netherlands, and the US reiterated their support for Guaidó, while fellow OPEC members Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE sharply criticised Venezuela's current leadership. Maduro did, however, find support in the delegates of major powers China and India, as well as NATO member Turkey, who each expressed their intention to continue working with his government.

Meanwhile, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) had the issue of human trafficking in the limelight.

The first session saw many non-ASEAN members suggest solutions, ranging from stricter border controls and policing, to uplifting of vulnerable populations out of poverty. While there was debate over the effectiveness of measures like implementing new tracking technologies and training of customs officials, there was a general consensus in the direction of the elimination of human trafficking.

That is, until the second session, which took a surprising turn, as some 12 countries among the 20 present found themselves united in support of human trafficking, including China, Laos, and Malaysia, the delegate of Myanmar even advocating for the legalisation of the illicit trade, ostensibly to boost the economies of LEDCs (Less Economically Developed Countries).

Pakistan further laid the blame on Australia and other developed nations for “completely disregarding LEDCs” and hence forcing them to take such measures.

Further justifications included the removal of ‘low social status’ people, including the poor and homeless.



An unplanned intrusion during the second session of the European Union. (Sophia Tan/Washington Post)

The ARF faced stiff competition in the 'unexpected events' category, as a hijab-wearing woman escorted by two gunmen stormed the second session of the European Union, demanding the repeal of bans on head coverings in Europe.

Washington Post correspondents on site reported that she was “outraged about the prohibition, and did not want to be told how to practice her faith”.

Only the next session will tell if this incident will provide fuel for Austria and France’s defense of the ban, which is opposed by Ireland, Sweden, Croatia and many like-minded delegates, who primarily cited freedom of religion and personal expression as the basis for their arguments.

Finland and Germany are still on the fence, with both delegates proposing a more limited ban, the latter singling out schools as an example of areas where such a ban would apply.

Debate will resume tomorrow morning in all eight councils.

*Sophia Tan, Gareth Chong, Reuben Ramachandran, and Nezhad Yusuf Bin  
Mohammed Feisal contributed to this report.*