

GA 6 – Legal Committee

Setting legislation to the Control of Violence Against Protesters

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1. Committee Introduction

GA6, also known as Legal Committee is the primary forum for the consideration of legal questions in the General Assembly. All UN Member States have their representatives in the Sixth Committee. It is supposed to promote the progressive development of public international law.

2. Chair Introduction

Dearest delegates, my name is Kateřina Choutková [but please, call me Katie] and it is my greatest pleasure to chair the Legal Committee during PLISMUN 2019. After two years of participating in conferences as a delegate, chairing is a possibility where I can share my own experience and help other people develop their potential. Moreover, I love meeting new people and I am more than excited to get to know all of you as well!

To conclude my brief introduction, should you have any problems or questions, do not hesitate to contact me or my co-chair Pavla.

3. Topic Overview

Having the opportunity to freely say out loud what is on your mind is more important than most of us would realize. Although it is considered to be one of the basic human rights, not everybody has it, unfortunately. It can be easily violated, either by a country in general or by any individual in a particular situation.

Generally speaking, violence against protesters can be divided into three main categories:

- a) violence committed by state force (e.g. police, army...)
- b) violence committed by one protester against another
- c) violence committed by a civilian who does not in any way take part in the protest

Nonetheless, the cases of violence against protesters have recently increased. Although the countries differ and so does background of the incidents, the outcome is similar in most of the cases – injuries or even death. Therefore, it is more than necessary that our committee creates unified guideline / legislation that citizens and countries can follow.

4. Major Parties Involved

1. USA
2. Russia
3. Iraq
4. Israel – Palestine
5. Nicaragua

5. Key Terms

Freedom of expression / Freedom of speech

Freedom of expression is recognized as a human right under article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which states that "everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference" and "everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice".

Protester

= a person who publicly demonstrates opposition to something; a demonstrator

Violence

= the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation

6. Issues to consider

- In which cases is violence against protesters relevant and should be considered legal?
- How can we protect the basic human rights, especially the freedom of expression/ freedom of speech, in terms of this topic?
- How important is personal defense of each individual and how can we determine the cases where it is adequate?

7. Links for further research

- <http://www.un.org/en/ga/sixth/>
- <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-police-officers-use-force-in-protests-2014-8>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/08/donald-trump-anti-protest-bills>
- <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/03/iraq-violence-against-protesters-and-journalists-in-kurdistan-region-shows-blatant-disregard-for-freedom-of-expression/>
- <https://rsf.org/en/news/police-violence-against-reporters-becoming-normal-russian-protests>
- <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/07/1014802>
- <https://www.dailysabah.com/mideast/2018/04/18/37-us-jews-protesting-israels-violence-against-palestinians-in-gaza-arrested>