**Addressing governmental corruption and instability in Bangladesh**

**Distinguished Delegates,**

We warmly welcome you to our INMUN 2024 conference and to our committee. You are now part of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)! The upcoming days until the conference may seem intimidating. In preparation, please use this research document to guide you through your initial research endeavours.

We are here to assist you. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us. We believe in collaboration, so feel free to communicate with your fellow delegates, share insights, and collectively contribute to our committee's success.

We look forward to meeting you in person during the conference. Let's make this experience memorable and impactful together!

Best of luck,

Stian Quoc Phong Pham, UNODC Chair stian.pham@elev.no

Julie Fredriksen-Skogli, UNODC Chair Juliskog@gmail.com

Prepared by Mikkel Eng Mathiassen and Tayra Tiro

# Introduction to UNODC



The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is a key player in the global fight against illegal drugs, transnational crime, corruption, and terrorism. Operating within the United Nations, the UNODC helps countries around the world address these challenges. Its broad mandate covers issues like public health in tackling drug problems and fostering international teamwork against crime. The UNODC takes a comprehensive approach, working to create a safer and more secure world through collaboration and strategic initiatives. UNODC works to educate people throughout the world about the dangers of drug abuse and to strengthen international action against illicit drug production and trafficking and drug-related crime.

The Commission is composed of 40 Member States elected by the Economic and Social Council, with the following distribution of seats among the regional groups:

(a) Twelve for African States;

(b) Nine for Asian States;

(c) Eight for Latin American and Caribbean States;

(d) Four for Eastern European States;

(e) Seven for Western European and other States.

# COUNTRY MATRIX

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **People's Republic of**  **Bangladesh** | **The Republic of India** | **United States of**  **America** | **The People's**  **Republic of**  **China** |
| **The United**  **Kingdom of Great**  **Britain and**  **Northern Ireland** | **The Arab Republic of**  **Egypt** | **Islamic Republic of**  **Iran** | **The**  **Democratic People's Republic of**  **Korea** |
| **French Republic** | **The**  **Commonwealth of Australia** | **Federal Republic of**  **Nigeria** | **The Russian**  **Federation** |

# INTRODUCTION TO THE ISSUE

Corruption in Bangladesh, like in many other developing nations, has been a major issue ever since its split with Pakistan in 1971. Currently, Bangladesh is the 31st most corrupt country in the world according to the Corruption Index and the 39th least stable country according to the Fragile States Index. Additionally, Bangladesh is one of the poorest nations, with its GDP per capita standing at only 2,529 USD (2023), and a HDI value of 0.67 (2022).

The Bangladeshi government collapsed on the August 5th, 2024, after months of student protests, known as the “Quota Reform Movement” (June 6th-August 3rd). The current incumbent Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, has fled to India. On November 18th, 2024, the interim leader, Muhammad Yunus, announced that he would seek Hasina’s extradition to face trial on multiple charges. The protests were initially started by 500 university students at Dhaka University, but the movement quickly spread throughout the country. The primary cause for the protests, that eventually led to the collapse of the government, was the reintroduction of the national job quota system, which gave a significant advantage to descendants of the veterans of the 1971 liberation war from Pakistan. Additionally, wider dissatisfaction with the government also played a role in the protest, such as wealth inequality and lack of employment options. Over the course of the riots at least 1000 people were killed during the “July massacre”, the government’s violent suppression of the revolution.

The issue of the job quotas and the government’s harsh response could be observed as a symptom of the larger issue, corruption and increasing autocratic tendencies. As Bangladesh is one of the fastest growing economies in the area. there is a large amount of wealth being produced, but whilst providing increased standards of living for the population, it is also a major contributing factor to instability. Current holders of wealth in the country increasingly employ illegal and unethical measures to preserve the status quo and to increase their hold over Bangladesh’s economy and political establishment.

## Current UN response and conventions

The current United Nations high commissioner for human rights Volker Türk has called for “sustainable and durable” reforms, so that “the abusive practices of the last decades are not repeated”. The UN has also highlighted the importance of free speech and social cohesion for the country to return to stability. The UN has collaborated with the interim government to carry out programmes such as a vaccination campaign against HPV.

There are two paramount conventions on the issue. The United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), that was adopted by the GA in 2003 and effective from 2005. UNCAC is the only legally binding international anti-corruption instrument, and all but seven member nations (Andorra, Eritrea, Monaco, North Korea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Syria) have ratified it. The convention contains provisions addressing the international nature of corruption by encouraging international cooperation, the return of the proceeds of corruption and a legal framework from which countries could work together. In practice, this legislature *requires* every signatory to take appropriate measures to combat corruption. In the further reading section of the research report a PDF of the convention can be found.

United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) was adopted in 2000 and came into effect in 2003. Currently only 6 member nations have not ratified it (Republic of the Congo, Iran, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Tuvalu). Even though it is a legally binding convention primarily focusing on international crime, it is still relevant for international and national government bodies primarily due to provisions targeting money laundering and international crime syndicates. The aforementioned crime syndicates prey on the instability of regions and thus propagate the instability, which makes the UNTOC relevant in taking action. The convention includes clauses requiring countries to take measures to hinder criminal organization’s safe haven inside of their territorial borders.

# KEY VOCABULARY

* **National sovereignty** – a core principle of international law governing international relations, which affirms States' independence and authority to govern their domestic jurisdiction.
* **Corruption** – The abuse of entrusted governmental or institutional power for private gain, such as public servants demanding or taking money or favours in exchange for services or politicians misusing public money or granting public jobs or contracts to their sponsor.
* **Transparency** – principle which obliges governments to be open, accountable and honest with citizens on how they are operating, such as how tax money is spent and what the process behind appointments is.
* **Public integrity** – adherence to ethical standards by public officials.
* **Bribery** – offering a public official, directly or indirectly, of an undue advantage, such as a monetary compensation, in order that the official act or refrain from acting in the exercise of their official duties.
* **Nepotism** – a form of favouritism based on family and familiar acquaintances whereby someone in an official position exploits their power and authority to provide jobs to family members or friends.
* **Clientelism** – the exchange of personal favours for political support, an unequal system of exchanging resources and favours based on an exploitative relationship.
* **Rule of law** – the principle that all people and institutions are subject to and accountable to law.
* **Judicial independence** – the freedom of courts from influence by other branches of government.
* **Whistleblower protection** – safeguarding for individuals who report illegal or unethical activities often at risk to themselves or close relations.
* **Accountability** – the obligation of the government and its actors to be answerable for all decisions made and all actions taken by them.
* **Authoritarianism** – a political system characterised by the rejection of political plurality, the use of strong central power to preserve the political status quo, and reductions in democracy, separation of powers, civil liberties, and the rule of law.
* **Patronage** - distribution of resources or jobs in return for political support.
* **Misappropriation** – the act of stealing something that one has been trusted to take care of and using it for themselves.

Further definitions for common terminology can be found here: <https://www.unodc.org/documents/e4j/Secondary/Anti-Corruption_Glossary.pdf>

**Further Reading:**

<https://www.unodc.org/documents/brussels/UN_Convention_Against_Corruption.pdf>

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/middleeastandnorthafrica/organised-](https://www.unodc.org/documents/middleeastandnorthafrica/organised-crime/UNITED_NATIONS_CONVENTION_AGAINST_TRANSNATIONAL_ORGANIZED_CRIME_AND_THE_PROTOCOLS_THERETO.pdf)

[crime/UNITED\_NATIONS\_CONVENTION\_AGAINST\_TRANSNATIONAL\_ORGANIZE](https://www.unodc.org/documents/middleeastandnorthafrica/organised-crime/UNITED_NATIONS_CONVENTION_AGAINST_TRANSNATIONAL_ORGANIZED_CRIME_AND_THE_PROTOCOLS_THERETO.pdf)

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<https://www.unodc.org/e4j/zh/mun/crime>[-prevention/corruption.html](https://www.unodc.org/e4j/zh/mun/crime-prevention/corruption.html) <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/10/1156306>

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[https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/07/bangladesh-un-experts-call-immediate-endhttps://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/07/bangladesh-un-experts-call-immediate-end-violent-crackdown-and-fullviolent-crackdown-and-full](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/07/bangladesh-un-experts-call-immediate-end-violent-crackdown-and-full)