

# **The European International Model United Nations 2019**

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## **United Nations Human Rights Council**



### **Minorities in Favelas, Slums, and Ghettos: Ensuring a better Tomorrow for People without Rights**

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*By Fred Hilton and Alice von Nesselrode*

## Minorities in Favelas, Slums, and Ghettos: Ensuring a better Tomorrow for People without Rights

### **Welcome Letter**

On behalf of the European International Model United Nations, we would like to welcome you to the Human Rights Council. We look forward to being your chairs and ensuring that your Model United Nations experience is valuable and, most importantly, enjoyable!

The Human rights challenges that exist in today's world are often complex and pervasive, as a result, the task of addressing them is certainly not an easy one; Nevertheless, a rewarding self-developmental week is guaranteed to those who are willing to put their mind to the area at hand. As a delegate, you will have the opportunity to grow and expand your knowledge of the topics selected for this year's TEIMUN Human rights Council, whilst also being able to engage in social activities, building contacts and friendships.

The Human Rights Council, founded in 2006 with its total of 47 United Nations Member States, has since been responsible for directing the discourse of the international community in regards to pressing and current human rights problems. As such, the sessions will include intensive discussions that will make it necessary for all delegates to consider solutions for real international human rights issues in the light of the country they have been selected to represent in the council. Owing to the variety of values held by the nations of the world in relation to human rights, the main difficulty will be in the unifying of these positions. Therefore, as a delegate, you will have to be mindful of more than just your country's stance on the topics, but also of the opinion of the other nations that your fellow delegates will represent in the week's discussion. Additionally, it is necessary that you remain mindful of the rules of procedure that allow for productive and organised debate.

We hope that you are looking forward to TEIMUN as much as we are and are sure you will have an experience that is as rewarding as it is fun!

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# Minorities in Favelas, Slums, and Ghettos: Ensuring a better Tomorrow for People without Rights

## Historical Background

Unfortunately, most countries have poor areas, where its inhabitants live off basically nothing and barely have enough to survive. They are called favelas, slums or ghettos, and the reasons for their existence differ from country to country- yet, they seem to be most prevalent in big cities. In Brazil, the first favela was established at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Rio de Janeiro, when soldiers came to the city to get paid after the War of Canudos (1896-1897). However, they never received their wage from the government and thus had to settle in on one of Rio's hills. This is how the first favela of Brazil, 'Providência', was created<sup>1</sup>. In the following century, the wave of migration from the countryside to big cities following urbanisation expanded the already existing favelas, and the crime rates skyrocketed. Only since the mid-1980s, the inhabitants of favelas have the right for property, yet most of them are not allowed to participate in official elections and don't have access to education.

Today, about 6% of the Brazilian population lives in favelas<sup>2</sup>, where they mostly engage in drug trafficking and prostitution. Only a few manage to find work in the city, mainly as cleaning ladies or kitchen staff. Sanitation barely exists, making the spread of diseases and sickness inevitable. Due to the bad structure of the built huts, the inhabitants are highly susceptible to weather changes; heavy rain often wipes out entire parts of favelas.

But not only Brazil is notorious for its poor parts, slums also exist in other countries such as India, where more people live in slums than the population of the whole of Great Britain<sup>3</sup>. Similar to the favelas in Brazil, the main reason for the formation of slums were urbanisation, political corruption and poverty.

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<sup>1</sup> Brown, Sarah. 2017. "A Brief History Of Rio De Janeiro'S Favelas". *Culture Trip*. <https://theculturetrip.com/south-america/brazil/articles/a-brief-history-of-rio-de-janeiros-favelas/>.

<sup>2</sup> "Favela | Brazilian Shantytown". 2019. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Accessed June 16. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/favela>.

<sup>3</sup> "Major Slum Areas In Top Ten Cities Of India". 2019. *Walkthroughindia.Com*. Accessed June 16. <http://www.walkthroughindia.com/lifestyle/major-slum-areas-in-top-indian-cities/>.

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Mumbai hosts around 20 million citizens<sup>4</sup>, and more than half of them live in areas of extreme poverty or even slums<sup>5</sup>. Many of them live in Dharavi, which used to be a fishing village in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but under the growth of urbanization, its population increased. By 1947, Dharavi had grown to be the biggest slum of Asia, which it is still nowadays. Like in Brazil, the weather can be the biggest enemy of the slum dwellers, especially during monsoon season.

### Status Quo of the issue

According to a study by Habitat for Humanity, 1 billion people worldwide have been recorded to live in slums<sup>6</sup>, although recent polls show a drastic decrease in the number<sup>7</sup>. In 2008, the Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) was launched by UN-Habitat, which up until today has influenced the lives of more than 2 million inhabitants of slums by supporting integration policies of the respective governments and enabling the sharing of information and data<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> "Mumbai Population". 2019. *Worldpopulationreview.Com*. Accessed June 16. <http://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/mumbai-population/>.

<sup>5</sup> "Drone Photos Of Mumbai Reveal The Places Where Extreme Poverty Meets Extreme Wealth". 2018. *Business Insider Nederland*. <https://www.businessinsider.nl/aerial-drone-photos-mumbai-extreme-wealth-slums-2018-9/?international=true&r=US>.

<sup>6</sup> "1 Billion People Live In Slums | Habitat For Humanity Ireland". 2019. *Habitatireland.Ie*. Accessed June 16. <https://www.habitatireland.ie/2018/01/1-billion-people-live-slums/>.

<sup>7</sup> "Population Living In Slums (% Of Urban Population) | Data". 2019. *Data.Worldbank.Org*. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.POP.SLUM.UR.ZS?view=chart>.

<sup>8</sup> "Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) – UN-Habitat". 2019. *Unhabitat.Org*. Accessed June 16. <https://unhabitat.org/urban-initiatives/initiatives-programmes/participatory-slum-upgrading/>.

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**Figure 1.3: Global patterns of urbanization, 2015**

Source: Based on United Nations, 2014b.

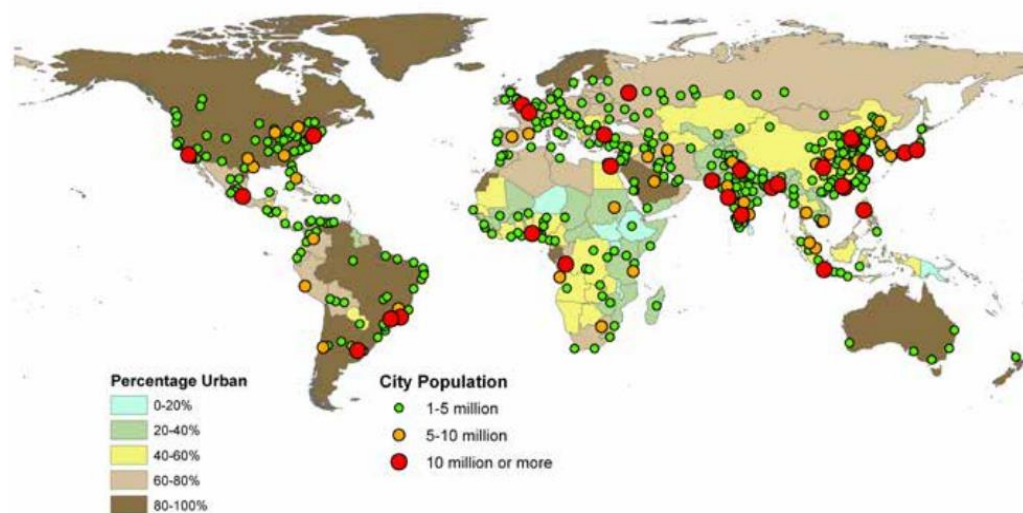


Image: UN World Cities Report 2016<sup>9</sup>

Slums are prevalent in most third world countries such as India, South Sudan and Brazil. The five biggest slums around the world are in Cape town (400.000 inhabitants), Nairobi (700.000 inhabitants), Mumbai (1 Million inhabitants), Mexico City (1.2 Million inhabitants) and in Karachi (2.4 Million inhabitants)<sup>10</sup>.

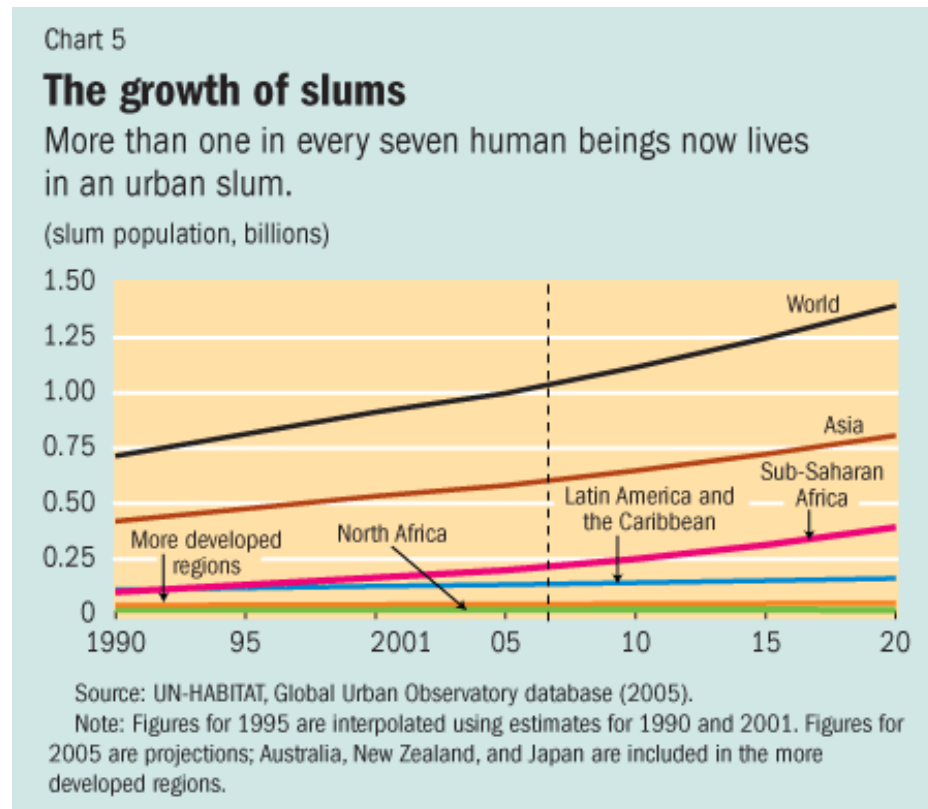
Disregarding the declaration of Human Rights, the inhabitants of the former are still being discriminated against, and do not enjoy the basic Human Rights. 30% of the population of the city Rio de Janeiro does not have a connection to a proper sanitation system<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Hutt, Rosamond. 2016. "These Are The World's Five Biggest Slums". *World Economic Forum*. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/10/these-are-the-worlds-five-biggest-slums/>.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

<sup>11</sup> "Rio Favela Facts". 2019. *Catalytic Communities | Catcomm*. Accessed June 16. <https://catcomm.org/favela-facts/>.

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IMF <sup>12</sup>

### Involved Parties and the stance of the International Community

The United Nations have launched several projects in order to support the inhabitants of slums and favelas, such as the previously mentioned PSUP. Furthermore, they are organizing the conference Habitat III, which is the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, in which measures to improve the infrastructure of slums and favelas were discussed<sup>13</sup>. UN Women moreover created 'Safe Cities' to help women living in poverty off the streets<sup>14</sup>. Moreover, the respective governments have invested in projects to improve the living

<sup>12</sup> Bloom, David. 2007. "The Urban Revolution". *Finance And Development | F&D*.  
<https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2007/09/bloom.htm>.

<sup>13</sup> <http://habitat3.org/>

<sup>14</sup> Sundholm, Mattias. 2019. "In Rio De Janeiro's Favelas, A New Online Tool Tackles Violence Against Women And Girls - Office Of The Secretary-General'S Envoy On Youth". *Office Of The Secretary-General'S Envoy On Youth*. Accessed June 16. <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2013/08/in-rio-de-janeiros-favelas-a-new-online-tool-tackles-violence-against-women-and-girls/>.

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conditions of slum dwellers such as 'The Favela Bairro Project' or 'Slum to Neighbourhood'<sup>15</sup>, established respectively in 1995 and in 1997<sup>16</sup>. Those projects intend to give more chances to the inhabitants of favelas, to establish policies tackling the different issues such as lack of sanitation systems, and to better the educational system.

Furthermore, NGO's such as Amnesty International attempt to shed more light onto the life in slums through radio podcasts and reports, with which they want to give the poor a voice of their own<sup>17</sup>.

### The implications of the problem

The implications of favelas and slums are rather severe: The lack of sanitation and garbage disposals make it easy for diseases to spread, and slum dwellers do not have the means to pay for medicine and doctor visits. In Rocinha, the second biggest favela of Latin America, there are currently only two hospitals, one being a church and the other one only having been established in 2009<sup>18</sup>.

Furthermore, the drug traffic poses a serious threat: As it is hard to find a job outside the slum or favela, many engage in illegal drug trade. Brazil's 'cracolândias' (Cracklands) are probably the most well known hot spots for crime and drugs, making Brazil one of the largest countries in crack and cocaine trade<sup>19</sup>.

Another aspect are the humanitarian issues resulting from the poverty: According to a study from Save the Children, 2 million children under the age of 5 die every year in Indian slums as a result from factors such as pneumonia and malnutrition<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/guides/zk32pv4/revision/11>

<sup>16</sup> "From Slum To Neighbourhood - World Habitat". 2019. *World Habitat*. Accessed June 16. <https://www.world-habitat.org/world-habitat-awards/winners-and-finalists/from-slum-to-neighbourhood/>.

<sup>17</sup> "Speaking Up From The Slums". 2012. *Amnesty.Org*. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2012/04/speaking-slums/>.

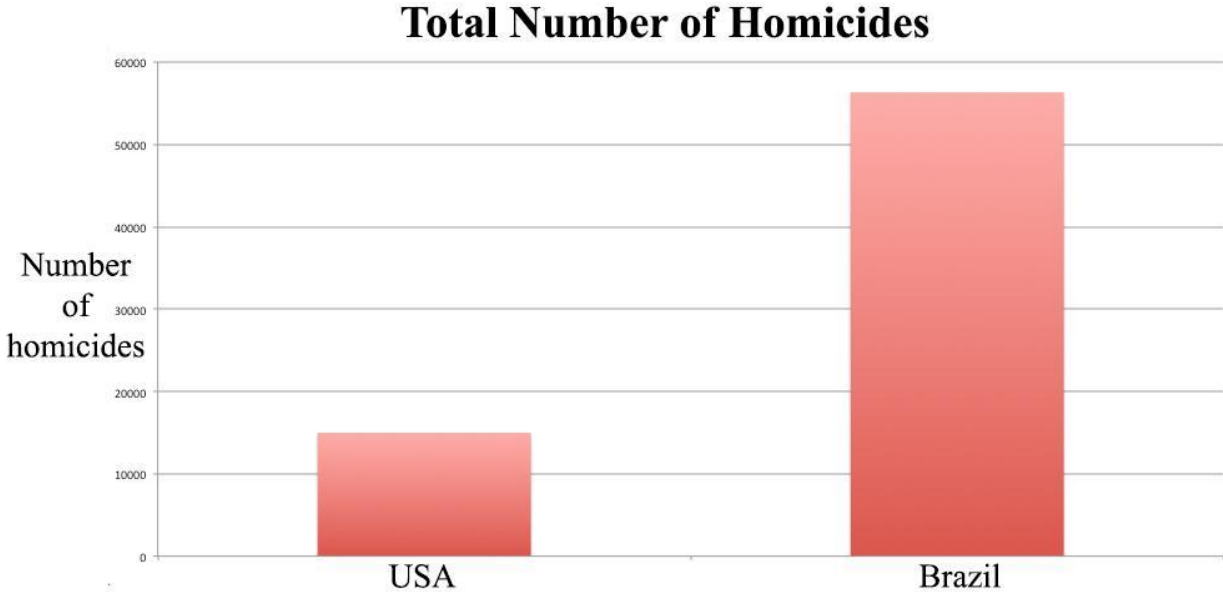
<sup>18</sup> "Health Issues". 2019. *Rocinha Favela*. Accessed June 16. <https://rocinhafavela.weebly.com/health-issues.html>.

<sup>19</sup> Yagoub, Mimi. 2016. "South America'S Drug Slums: Jurisdiction Of Organized Crime". *Insight Crime*. <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/south-america-drug-slums-jurisdiction-organized-crime/>.

<sup>20</sup> Chamberlain, Gethin. 2009. "Two Million Slum Children Die Every Year As India Booms". *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/oct/04/india-slums-children-death-rate>.

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Lastly, due to no garbage disposals and rubbish collection, large parts of the favelas are polluted, with the pollution spreading through rivers and lakes. This has an impact on Brazil's ecosystem and their contribution to climate change<sup>21</sup>.



year 2012<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/bitesize/guides/zk32pv4/revision/11>

<sup>22</sup> "Statistics Reveal Alarming Rate Of Police Violence In Rio | Rioonwatch". 2019. *Rioonwatch.Org*. Accessed June 16. <https://www.rioonwatch.org/?p=21350#prettyPhoto>.



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### Conclusion

*"Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law."* – Article 6, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>23</sup>

According to a report by BBC, 65% of Brazil's favela residents are now part of the new middle class of the country<sup>24</sup>. This shows the increasing importance of dealing with the situation and improving the lives of the inhabitants of favelas, as they more and more influence the daily life also outside of favelas.

Yet, despite the international effort through various NGO's and UN bodies, there are still around 1 billion people living in slums and favelas worldwide, who are being denied many rights and have little to none opportunities to improve their situation.

The clear breach of Human Rights by not providing them properly to slum- and favela dwellers needs to be addressed more thoroughly by the United Nations as it constitutes of both a threat to slum dwellers as well as to the societies they live in. By analysing the situation and discussing it in an international setting, a sustainable solution can be found in order to ensure a better future for people without rights.

### QARMA's

1. What is the definition of slums and favelas?
2. How can the infrastructure of favelas and slums be improved?
3. What rights must be given to the inhabitants of favelas and slums?
4. How can new rights be ensured in a sustainable way?
5. How can international cooperation ensure a betterment of the situation?
6. Is there a way to eliminate favelas and slums in the long run?

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<sup>23</sup> "Article 6". 2019. *Claiminghumanrights.Org*. Accessed June 16.

[http://www.claiminghumanrights.org/udhr\\_article\\_6.html](http://www.claiminghumanrights.org/udhr_article_6.html).

<sup>24</sup> "Favela Life: Rio's City Within A City". 2014. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-27635554>.

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[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318848490\\_Socio-economic\\_Status\\_of\\_Slum\\_Dwellers\\_An\\_Empirical\\_Study\\_on\\_the\\_Capital\\_City\\_of\\_Bangladesh](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318848490_Socio-economic_Status_of_Slum_Dwellers_An_Empirical_Study_on_the_Capital_City_of_Bangladesh)

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