



## Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee

**Topic: *Illegal imprisonment and assassination of political leaders***

### Glossary

**Political Leader:** A person active in party politics; He/she who possess qualities of a conductor, integrator, articulator, connoisseur, and defender of the people.

**Opposition:** In politics, the opposition consists of one or more political parties or other organized groups that are opposed to the party or group in political control of a city, region, state or country ideologically.

**Freedom of Speech/Expression:** The power or right to express one's opinions without censorship, restraint, or legal penalty.

**Political Prisoners:** Someone who is imprisoned for their political beliefs or actions.

**Universal Declaration of Human Rights:** A milestone document in the history of human rights. Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations; it sets out fundamental human rights to be universally protected.

### Introduction

An **opposition** is a factor that can never be ruled out of politics. For every type of political party or movement, there will be an opposing ideology that will be represented by a person or group of people;

and according to article 19 of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, "...everyone

*shall have the right to hold opinions without interference...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".* This meaning that the opposition has every right to be opposing a certain political ideology, but unfortunately, people who crave for and are in a position of power, or sometimes even just those who strongly disagree with a different political point of view, tend to feel threatened once an opposition appears, and their primal instinct is to eradicate such a threat. The means to this end are found in the censure of the opposition's **political leader's** message, most often seen in the way of imprisonment under, often enough, false pretexts; in which at that point, they become **political prisoners**. In another extreme, yet not uncommon cases, the only way in which a political message or leader manages to censor is through his or her assassination.

Another way to look at political assassinations is when the leader of a certain nation is not necessarily the one that the people want. When generating political fragmentation and polarization, a political leader is more likely to receive constant retaliation from the deprived and non-conformed social, ethnic, political, religious, or cultural groups.

### Context

Jorge Eliecer Gaitán was a Colombian lawyer and political leader renowned for his liberal speeches and promises to the masses. Already having



an outstanding political career as a liberal and populist figure rather than a socialist one, (Senator in 1942, president of the Senate in 1942, Minister of Employment between 1943 and 1944,) he decided to participate in the 1946 presidential elections and managed to end up in third place, surpassing every kind of expectation that was held. Nevertheless, Gaitán continued to spread his political messages and voiced his disapproval with the current regime. Although having a great following, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán was frowned upon by the right-wing conservatives. His actions and ideas eventually lead to his assassination the ninth of April of 1948, which evolved into the infamous Bogotazo.

Nelson Mandela, renowned South African ex-president and Nobel Peace Prize winner, was imprisoned the fifth of August of 1962 for attempting to overthrow the *Apartheid* regime in South Africa. Nelson Mandela's fight for equality and desegregation in his country is well known throughout the world. The fundament of his political career was to bring the *Apartheid* to an end. He was persecuted and imprisoned by the believers of white supremacy, which were those who ran the government of South Africa at that time.

Leopoldo López is a Venezuelan opposition leader to the regime of Nicolás Maduro who, on February 18 of 2014, was imprisoned for allegedly inciting others to violent protests. He was later offered domiciliary arrest (still maintaining his sentence of 13 years) under the condition that he was not able to transmit any kind of political message during his sentence and was to keep quiet any type of opinion towards the Venezuelan Government. The attempt to censure the opposition is blatant on behalf of the State, adding to the

ever-growing list of political atrocities committed by governments or political parties all around the globe.

## Approach

- To sustain a forum regarding the different ways that the illegal imprisonment and assassination of political leaders can be prevented
- To condemn these acts and the perpetrators of such

## Sources

- "The Causes and Impact of Political Assassinations – Combating Terrorism Center at West Point." *Combating Terrorism Center at West Point*, 15 Nov. 2017, [ctc.usma.edu/the-causes-and-impact-of-political-assassinations/](http://ctc.usma.edu/the-causes-and-impact-of-political-assassinations/).
- "Political Imprisonment." *Human Rights Watch*, [www.hrw.org/tag/political-imprisonment](http://www.hrw.org/tag/political-imprisonment).
- "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." United Nations, United Nations, [www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/](http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/).
- Brittain, Victoria. "Political Assassination as a Strategy Against Liberation Movements." *Pambazuka News | Voices for Freedom and Justice*, 19 Oct. 2006, [www.pambazuka.org/activism/political-assassination-strategy-against-liberation-movements](http://www.pambazuka.org/activism/political-assassination-strategy-against-liberation-movements).
- Perliger, Arie. *The Rationale of Political Assassinations. The Rationale of Political Assassinations*, [pdfs.semanticscholar.org/febe/e34d](http://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/febe/e34d)



[18053f78ae887f219366ecba6b7190d4.pdf](#).

- “The Imprisonment of Nelson Mandela.” *The Imprisonment of*

*Nelson Mandela / Oxford Open Learning,*

[www.ool.co.uk/blog/imprisonment-nelson-mandela/](http://www.ool.co.uk/blog/imprisonment-nelson-mandela/).

