

Beginner Committee DISEC

SJMUNC XXXVIII

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Letter From Your Chair:

Welcome to DISEC! My name is Gabe Mercado-Lubo, a senior here at Saint John's High School, and I will be your chair for our committee this year, Arush Patel.

This is my fourth year as a member of Model UN at Saint John's and also my fourth year participating in SJMUNC. I have attended five national conferences, including Brown University and the University of Chicago, so I have a decent amount of MUN experience, which I hope will help us have a smooth committee experience. I am also involved with our XBSS team, Latin affinity, Investment club, and DECA.

At this conference, it is our job to ensure that your experience is one in which you have fun while also learning something new. We have carefully chosen this topic because we feel that it would be relevant and engaging. With any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me at the email below.

Good luck to all of you, and I can't wait to see you all in committee soon.

Gabriel Mercado-Lubo - mercag26@stjohnshigh.org

Statement of Problem

When discussing the Yakuza, Triad, and Chaebols (Business Conglomerates) are usually a popular section of the media industry, seeing them in video games, movies, and even shows. Used for our entertainment purposes, the Western and much of the rest of the world usually have different adaptations of these crime syndicates. Although used for entertaining the general public, these crime syndicates are very much real, posing issues around East Asia. Crime syndicates have been around for decades in eastern Asia, but the most prominent have been the Yakuza, Triad, and Chaebols, causing DISEC to divide its power and responsibilities among the three.

Organized crime continues to pose a significant threat to international peace, security, and political stability. In East Asia, the Chinese Triad, South Korean Chaebols, and Japanese Yakuza have shown actions leading to dramatic effects on national politics, economic systems, and state influence.

The Triads, which have their roots in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, possess a global network to traffic drugs, human smuggling, and trade weapons. The Triad has even been used by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to impose its influence by force, suppressing dissent and conducting political warfare internationally. Japan's traditional crime syndicates, the Yakuza, at times have operated openly with complex relationships between business and political leaders. They usually have international affairs: Trafficking Heroin in Thailand, and abalone smuggling in South Africa. Meanwhile, South Korea's powerful family-owned conglomerates, Chaebols, though legally tolerated, have been tainted by some of the nation's most-publicized corruption scandals, political meddling, and monopolistic practices that blur the line separating corporate clout and criminal domination.

These networks constitute a threat to global action against transnational crime and to the defense of fair democratic institutions. Their ability to influence lawmaking, exploit weak systems of governance, and operate across borders calls for multilateral efforts and multiplied international devices. The growing intermingling of politics and organized crime undermines states' sovereignty and the integrity of legal institutions.

DISEC must now consider the global security dimension of such groups and be capable of experimenting with different alternatives for breaking up their criminal-political networks without infringing on national sovereignty and regional politics. Each crime group/family will have representatives who will be sent to talk on behalf of these crime syndicates.

It's up to the delegates now, will the families that have lasted generations be dissolved in the matter of hours, or will they live to see another day?

History of The Problem

East Asia's political and economic landscape has been significantly shaped by organized crime. The South Korean Chaebols, Japanese Yakuza, and Chinese Triads have all demonstrated how corporate or criminal power can become ingrained in national systems, frequently obfuscating the distinction between legitimate authority and illicit influence. Their activities have transcended national boundaries, posing major obstacles to international cooperation and raising worries about global security.

In the 18th century, the Chinese Triads were secret societies, but they have since expanded into sizable international criminal networks. They engage in cybercrime, drug trafficking, weapons smuggling, and human trafficking while operating in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and mainland China. The Triads have greatly changed through the course of their history from

being the Tinandui, at times a mutual aid and self-protection association for the lower class. Then, during the colonial period in China under British rule, the public demands had been ignored by the colonial government, causing more and more people to join these mutual-aid associations. In the post-colonial period, Triads have suffered many severe blows, such as the ICAC causing the protection that the Triads had received from the local police force to disappear. Although the triads faced such hindrances, the involvement alongside the government made the political powers of China rely on the Triads to do their dirty work. Political figures have created alliances with Triads, which makes it more difficult to differentiate between illegal activity and state-affiliated activities. It is challenging to enforce and hold them accountable due to their broad global reach and secret networks.

The Yakuza has long been regarded as one of the most well-organized criminal organizations in the world in Japan. They reached a staggering 184,000 members in the 1960s. Yamaguchi Harukichi is the largest gang within the Yakuza, founded in 1915. The Yakuza have also offered their help numerous times throughout the years, like when they donated and delivered supplies to survivors/victims of the Kobe earthquake of 1995 and the earthquake and tsunami of 2011. The Yakuza, in contrast to most criminal organizations, had offices and business relationships and operated openly for decades. In the past, they had ties to big businesses and political parties, which affected elections and financial choices. The Yakuza continue to engage in illicit gambling, extortion, and covert financial activities despite Japan's laws that have been passed to weaken them.

Although they are legally recognized, South Korea's Chaebols—large, family-run business conglomerates—have frequently been at the center of corruption scandals. Their unbridled economic power has resulted in bribery, unlawful mergers, and interference in politics,

despite not being criminal organizations in traditional terms. Chaebol's involvement in politics has led to many reports of corruption, such as the bribing of two of the former presidents, Chun Doo-Hwan and Rob Tae-woo. High-profile trials, including the impeachment of a president, have been the outcome of scandals involving prominent Chaebols like Samsung and Daewoo. However, a large number of these companies still function with minimal long-term accountability.

These influential organizations' capacity to function internationally, influence national governments, and deteriorate democratic institutions poses a particular risk to global peace and security. Finding ways to reduce their influence without infringing on national sovereignty or upsetting regional political stability is DISEC's challenge.

Possible Solutions

Suggestions may be provided to the committee for a multi-pronged strategy, and the interplay of criminal politics in East Asia, assessing the trade-off between global corporations and national sovereignty. Implementing a multilateral action plan to combat organized crime and corruption, and money laundering schemes that structurally prevent governance, could allow member states to work together to build regional task forces and build better supportive platforms for holding capabilities regarding information sharing. UN support for accountability and transparency should promote capacity-building initiatives for the legal and enforcement sectors, as well as relevant activities for local business organizations. These economic opportunities to address illicit activities, by disincentivizing black market options by providing development assistance accompanying trade reductions/humanitarian incentives, could mitigate illicit activity via economic support from stakeholder perspectives. Monitoring organizations or special bonds

could be established via the UN to observe, ensure, and report that applicable global norms are engaged and upheld through existing global instruments. Ultimately, the answer must maintain a balance between collective security and sovereign rights. We would also like to note that we encourage creativity and would love to see all the great things you guys can come up with throughout the committee.

Bloc Positions

Asia

China – Neutral

The government suppresses unauthorized crime but leverages triads and gray networks for geopolitical or economic ends.

Japan – Cautiously Neutral

Yakuza groups are officially banned but still operate discreetly; past toleration has faded under modern crackdowns.

South Korea – Against

Strong legal institutions reject organized crime influence, though corporate-political corruption (e.g., chaebols) persists.

North Korea – For

The regime reportedly uses state-sponsored criminal enterprises, including counterfeiting and drug smuggling.

Taiwan – Neutral

Triad ties to political parties existed historically; today's leadership distances itself from overt criminal alliances.

Vietnam – Neutral

Local criminal networks often coexist with political authorities, especially in economic zones.

Thailand – For

Criminal syndicates frequently collaborate with military and political figures in both rural and urban areas.

Myanmar – For

Drug warlords and military juntas operate symbiotically; criminal economies fuel political power.

Cambodia – For

Political elites are deeply entangled with organized crime, including land grabs and trafficking.

Laos – Neutral

Weak law enforcement allows drug and human trafficking, sometimes with official complicity.

Philippines – Neutral

Political violence, warlordism, and shadow operations blur the line between criminal and official conduct.

Malaysia – Neutral

High-profile corruption scandals (e.g., 1MDB) show political-criminal overlap, though reform efforts continue.

Indonesia – Neutral

Organized crime exists, particularly in ports and resource areas, with some political protection.

Singapore – Against

Maintains a zero-tolerance policy toward corruption and organized crime, with strong rule of law.

Bangladesh - Neutral

Systemic links to international syndicates remain limited

Sri Lanka - Neutral

Post-Civil War networks include smuggling and drug trafficking

Mongolia - Neutral

Organized crime is tied to resource extraction and smuggling across borders with Russia and China

Brunei - Against

Strict governance and religious law limit the political influence of organized crime.

Nepal – Neutral

Arms and human trafficking routes exploit weak enforcement in rural areas.

Bhutan – Against

Small size and tight regulation keep criminal-political overlap minimal.

Europe

Russia – For

Criminal networks, oligarchs, and the Kremlin often operate as an integrated system.

Ukraine – Neutral

Post-Maidan governments are attempting to eliminate deep-rooted criminal-political ties.

Belarus – For

The authoritarian regime uses criminal enforcers and smuggling to retain power.

Italy – Neutral

While mafia influence was once widespread, major crackdowns have reduced their political grip.

France – Against

Maintains strong state resistance to organized crime, though problems persist in drug trafficking regions.

Germany – Against

Well-regulated institutions limit criminal-political corruption, despite some underworld activity.

UK – Neutral

Political institutions resist traditional organized crime, but loopholes in finance allow white-collar abuse.

Netherlands – Neutral

Known for ports linked to drug trafficking, political ties to crime remain limited and indirect.

Spain – Neutral

Some regional corruption and mafia infiltration exist, but not at a national systemic level.

Albania – For

Organized crime is closely tied to political elites and often enjoys protection.

Serbia – Neutral

Criminal and political networks overlap, especially in nationalist and paramilitary circles.

Bulgaria – For

Corruption and mafia-state relationships are widely reported, including in law enforcement.

Romania – Neutral

EU integration pressures have led to anti-corruption reforms, though deep-rooted issues remain.

Greece – Neutral

Crime groups operate in urban zones, but systemic political involvement is rare today.

North and South America

USA – Neutral

While organized crime is pursued legally, lobbying and corporate-political collusion blur ethical lines.

Mexico – For

Cartels exert immense power through corruption, bribery, and political assassination.

Brazil – For

Criminal gangs like PCC operate with political ties, especially in urban slums and prisons.

Colombia – Neutral

Narco-politics remains a challenge despite decades of anti-cartel efforts.

Venezuela – For

The regime is directly linked to smuggling, trafficking, and criminal paramilitary groups.

Argentina – Neutral

Corruption is prevalent in some sectors, but direct cartel-politics integration is limited.

Peru – Neutral

Criminal economies such as illegal mining impact regional politics, especially in the Amazon.

Honduras – For

High-level narco-politics is a persistent threat to institutional integrity.

Guatemala – For

Politicians and security forces are often co-opted by drug traffickers and smugglers.

Canada – Against

Organized crime exists, but political institutions maintain high levels of integrity.

Panama – Neutral

Shipping and finance secrecy make it a transit point for illicit trade.

Paraguay – For

Foreign syndicates exploit corruption and weak institutions to launder money and route contraband.

Ecuador – Neutral

Increasingly a cocaine transit hub where foreign syndicates, including East Asian groups, have growing influence.

Africa

South Africa – Neutral

Criminal syndicates influence local politics and law enforcement in certain regions.

Nigeria – For

"Godfathers" and crime bosses often play kingmaker roles in political elections.

Somalia – For

Crime, piracy, and politics are inseparable in stateless or militia-controlled zones.

Kenya – Neutral

Political violence and corruption enable criminal elements, especially during elections.

DR Congo – For

Resource mafias and rebel groups work closely with local officials and elites.

Libya – For

Warlordism and smuggling define the post-Gaddafi power structure.

Egypt – Neutral

Political repression limits crime visibility, but gray networks thrive under state cover.

Mali – For

Militant and smuggling groups influence both rural governance and politics.

Algeria – Neutral

Shadow economies operate, though direct criminal-political links are less publicized.

Zimbabwe – For

State-linked cartels dominate gold smuggling and land seizures.

Middle East and Central Asia

Kazakhstan – Neutral

Oligarchs with criminal backgrounds often hold unofficial political sway.

Uzbekistan – For

Government officials have been linked to organized smuggling and human rights abuses.

Iran – Neutral

Uses gray networks (e.g., Hezbollah, illicit trade) to circumvent sanctions.

Iraq – For

Militias and criminal groups often hold political office or support major factions.

Syria – For

War economy and narcotics trafficking fund regime and allies.

Turkey – Neutral

Political factions have allegedly leveraged criminal gangs to suppress dissent.

Afghanistan – For

Opium trade and criminal governance have long supported local warlords.

Pakistan – Neutral

Elements of the state have tolerated or cooperated with criminal and militant groups.

United Arab Emirates – Neutral

Functions as a financial hub where East Asian syndicates launder money.

Oceania

Australia – Against

Active suppression of criminal organizations with robust legal institutions.

New Zealand – Against

Minimal corruption and rare criminal-political overlap.

Papua New Guinea – For

Tribal and gang influence on politics is widespread in local governance.

Fiji – Neutral

Corruption and local criminal collusion occur, but not at a transnational scale.

TRIAD GROUPS (Chinese Organized Crime)

14K - Hong Kong

One of the largest triad societies globally, involved in drug trafficking, extortion, and illegal gambling. Operates internationally, especially in Southeast Asia and Chinese diaspora areas.

Sun Yee On - Hong Kong

Highly structured triad with a presence in the UK, Australia, and Canada. Known for operating legitimate fronts alongside criminal activities.

Wo Shing Wo - Hong Kong

The oldest active triad in Hong Kong, involved in street-level crime and increasingly in cyber fraud and trafficking.

CHAEBOLS (South Korean Conglomerates)

Samsung Group - Electronics, Construction, Finance

South Korea's largest chaebol, has faced scandals over political bribery (e.g., 2017 Park Geun-hye scandal).

Hyundai Motor Group - Automotive, Construction

Deeply influential in Korean infrastructure and transport; involved in political lobbying and development projects.

LG Group - Electronics, Chemicals, Telecom

Less scandal-prone than Samsung, but still wields massive economic and political influence.

YAKUZA GROUPS (Japanese Organized Crime)

Yamaguchi-gumi - Kobe

The largest yakuza syndicate in Japan; involved in construction, gambling, fraud, and legitimate businesses.

Sumiyoshi-kai - Tokyo

A federation of loosely connected gangs; the second-largest yakuza group, with a more decentralized structure.

Inagawa-kai - Yokohama

The third-largest group has historical ties to politics and business in post-war Japan.



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