



LMUN 2026

A Background Guide for:
United Nations Humans Rights Council



LMUN 2026

**UNHRC | Addressing Human Rights Concerns and
Exploitation Along the Central Mediterranean Migration
Route**

Chair: Gabriela Valerio

Co-Chair: Gabriel Molina



Letter from Chairs

Dear Delegates,

Hello, my name is Gabriela Valerio, I am a 9th grader at Lincoln School, and I am greatly honored to welcome you to the United Nations Human Rights Council, where we will address human rights concerns and exploitation along the Central Mediterranean migration route in the 30th edition of Lincoln School Model United Nations. Throughout middle school and now high school, I have participated in several MUNs, gaining debate and negotiation skills. It is important to mention that this is my first time being a chair, and I couldn't be happier to guide you as you grow and develop during this conference. I strongly stand by the idea of fostering diplomacy, leadership, and consensus by MUN participation, where we tackle global issues; I look forward to seeing how you can set these principles in a diplomatic discussion, with such a crucial topic as the one we are encountering in this committee. Let's make this experience both fun and engaging!

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 30th edition of Lincoln Model United Nations. My name is Gabriel, and I am going to be your co-chair for this UNHRC committee. As a team, we are committed to creating a space where young scholars can step into the shoes of diplomats. In this conference, you will find yourself in a position where YOU will be the one taking decisions, discussing the future of your nations, writing resolutions, in order to ensure the humane treatment of migrants along the Central Mediterranean Route. This weekend, you will have the opportunity to state your opinion, exchange perspectives, collaborate with peers, but mainly, make your voice heard. Lastly, for delegates that are getting to know the program, please make the best out of this conference; make connections, share your ideas, and most importantly, be yourself. We are excited to meet all of you and watch your ideas come to life. Let this be the first step of your journey in your diplomatic process.

Please feel free to reach out to us at any time; we are here to support and make this experience rewarding for you: gmolina@lincoln.ed.cr; gvalerio@lincoln.ed.cr.

Your Chairs,

Gabriela Valerio & Gabriel Molina



Topic Introduction

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) released a statement that documented 28,320 people who had gone missing or died on the Central Mediterranean migration Route (CMR) since 2014 ([IOM, 2023](#)). This data supports the idea that this route is among the deadliest and most dangerous migration pathways in the world. Stretching from Algeria, Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia to Italy and Malta. This route covers multiple environments that establish a long-standing barrier between migrants and their human rights. For decades, ongoing conflict in this region, such as political repression, civil wars, persecutions and terrorism, gang networks, political asylum, climate change, and economic crisis, has triggered a humanitarian crisis, allowing criminal groups to violate human rights while taking advantage of the vulnerable state of migrants.

Since the number of people crossing via the Central Mediterranean Route has increased, there has been a noticeable deterioration in the economic situation in North Africa. This issue emphasizes the present-day urgency as the number of disfranchised people who do not see prospects to build a secure future, causing major concerns to populations. Migrants who are willing to take the risk of crossing the Central Mediterranean Route bear testimony to their desperation, as migrants understand their low survival rate, yet the unlivable conditions these people face force them to live, leaving aside their humanitarian rights. With few to no ways to seek protection, migrants are placed where violence, forced labor, sexual assault, and human trafficking take place. Each life that has been lost crossing this route represents the regional instability and the urgency of this crisis today; addressing these violations involves all international collaboration and action. States along the Central Mediterranean Route must balance border security with humanitarian obligations.

Discussing this topic will ultimately explore how states can ensure the protection of migrants' rights while addressing the concerns of national security. Furthermore, we'll negotiate to what extent responsibility for rescue operations and re-settlement be shared among the nations. Lastly, UNHRC is open to coordinating what mechanisms can be developed to combat human trafficking and exploitation along this route.



Key Terms

Central Mediterranean migration Route

(CMR): The Central Mediterranean Route is the main migration route from North Africa (Egypt, Tunisia, Libya) crossing the Mediterranean Sea leading to Southern Europe, primarily Italy and Malta. It is considered the deadliest migration route in the world.

Migration: Migration is the movement of individuals from their residence to a destination within their own country or across international borders. Migration can be either voluntary, such as a job offer in another city, or it can be forced due to war or other circumstances.

Irregular Migration: The movement of people that occurs outside the laws, taking record of those who enter or stay in a nation. For example, it takes place along the CMR as many flee their country without a migrant status to countries in Southern Europe, like Italy and Malta.

Human Trafficking: The unlawful act of transporting and abusing persons through coercion with intentions of exploitation. This phenomenon is present along the CMR as many are suppressed to sexual assault, exploitation, and forced labor.

Refugee: A refugee is an individual who has left their country and is unable to return and is facing persecution due to their religion, race, or political affiliation. For instance, those who are fleeing gang violence and war in North Africa are being affected, which causes them to immigrate to Southern Europe.

Asylum Seeker: It is an individual who has requested international help from a nation or a third party to obtain refugee status, but it hasn't been granted. For example, an Egyptian who left their country and is currently seeking asylum in Italy, but whose case has not yet approved, is considered an asylum seeker until their refugee status is granted.

Push-and-Pull Factors: The condition why individuals to leave their home country (known as push factors), such as socioeconomic factors or a certain conflict. Pull factors are those that attract them to another destination, typically opportunities for safety, improved living conditions, employment, and education.

Transit Country: This means a state that migrants cross while being on their way to their final destination. These countries are



not usually their goal, but their purpose stands as critical steps along migration routes worldwide. Along the Central Mediterranean Route, Libya and Tunisia are major transit countries.

Humanitarian Corridor: A humanitarian corridor is a safe and legal pathway established by states or humanitarian organizations, created to allow and support vulnerable individuals—such as refugees, asylum seekers, or people facing human rights violations to transit from dangerous zones to secure territories.

Non-Refoulement: Non-refoulement refers to the obligation of nations not send migrants back to a country where they would face persecution, extortion, and inhuman treatment. This principle was set in the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Exploitation: Exploitation is the unfair and abusive treatment of migrants for personal, financial, racial, or political situations— often taking advantage of their vulnerability.

Historical Context

In 2006, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) was established in order to promote and preserve human rights worldwide. It is composed of 47 member states, chosen by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). This branch addresses all human rights concerns, including those migration-related encounters. In cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), both bodies have tackled those vulnerable populations during transit. Over the past decades, the UNHRC has shifted its attention towards the crisis held in the Central Mediterranean migration Route, calling attention to human trafficking, exploitation, sexual abuse, and extreme violence.

The Central Mediterranean Route (CMR) became a grand migration corridor during the early 2000; yet, the situation drastically escalated during the 2011 Libyan Civil War— triggering an unprecedented surge in irregular migration and a massive-scale humanitarian crisis ([Britannica, 2025](#)). Migrants have desperately sought help NGO's, local government, and even international aid. Due to prevailing laws and an unstable government, the restraint in their own country is normalized, allowing these persistent abuses to continue. That said, asylum seekers—



mainly from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Horn of Africa, and the Middle East decide to take on this dangerous journey. In 2015, the European migrant crisis brought about an overwhelming increase in migrants choosing to flee to Southern Europe ([gchumanrights, 2020](#)). Thousands embarked upon this journey, to which the EU and its member states took immediate action, cooperating with the Libyan Coast Guards to intercept boats. Although these measures were taken to reduce irregular migration in this region, many were left unattended, which often led to refoulement. This sequentially exposed international human rights obligations regarding who is responsible for assuming custody of this population ([BBC, 2020](#)).

Several organizations, such as the IOM, UNHRC, OHCHR, and several other agencies, including local NGO have significantly mitigated the impact of this issue. They play a key role by providing aid, combating trafficking, and monitoring abuses that have taken place in this region. Ongoing concerns also pose a major concern, such as climate change, instability of local governments and economies, and a secure way for migrants to travel across borders safely in an organized manner. Initiatives such as the 2017 Memorandum of Understanding, IOM return Programs, and UNHRC evacuation efforts have aimed to reduce illegal migration and exploitation, yet they have failed to establish a stable solution. Limited coordination and cooperation between countries have made negotiation terms tougher, causing tension to rise. This conflict calls upon greater international cooperation to establish safe migration conditions and a good treatment of refugees.

Committee Background

The United Nations Human Rights Council was established on March 15, 2006, as a subsidiary intergovernmental body (meaning it was created by the UNGA and is made up of countries that work together to protect human rights). According to [ohchr.org](#), the UNHRC system is made up of 47 State Members in 2025. This council is in charge and in control of strengthening the protection of human rights globally (2025). Up to now, it was mandated to address and create actionable recommendations regarding human rights violations, wherever found, and to discuss all human rights issues requiring the attention of the committee; such as



violence against women and children, sexual violence in conflict, genocide, human rights of indigenous people and disabled, child soldiers, and human trafficking.

This institution, after being opened for less than a one year period, recognized the following: “institution-building package”. This had the intention to guide its work and establish its mechanisms. Some examples of the procedures were: the universal periodic review mechanism, by which the council assesses the human rights records of every UN member state, including members of the council itself during their terms of membership (Britannica, [2026](#)). This “institution-building package” furthermore established several “Special Procedures”, including independent experts, known as Special Rapporteurs, who monitor and report on specific human rights issues. These mechanisms have allowed UNHRCI to respond quickly to violations and promote accountability among Member States.

Through these tools, the United Nations Human Rights Council continues to fulfill its mission: promoting universal respect and freedom for the protection of all humans. Its work remains crucial in addressing ongoing crises—such as those faced by migrants along the Central Mediterranean migration Route.

Case Studies of Human Rights Violations Among the Central Mediterranean Migration Route (CMR)

Libya’s Detention Centers and Exploitation Network ([UN, 2022](#)).

Since 2010, Libya has become a corridor for migrants who are heading towards Europe, therefore, travelling via the Central Mediterranean Route. Torture, forced labor, and sexual abuse have been publicly circulated among the sub-Saharan African milita-controlled detention centers. Due to the vast number of refugees who accumulate on this territory, abusers often take advantage of their helpless situations. Moreover, we’ll include specific factors that make Libya a coveted nation:

- Humanitarian factor: In Libya, detainees often encounter inhumane conditions— for instance, overcrowding, starvation, and violence. Likewise, it’s speculated to violate Articles 3 and 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



- **Economic Factor:** The Central Mediterranean Route has become home to illegal operations to emerge, turning to profitable businesses for armed groups and corrupt officials. Modern slavery is being normalized and utilized, leading to constant exposure who none other than refugees are forced to experience.
- **Geopolitical Factor:** Libya has demonstrated several geopolitical factors, including authorities that are in charge of curbing this migration, funding of detention centers, constant surveillance, etc.
- **Government:** The Libyan government has been the puppeteer behind the curtains, hiding its controversial intentions with detention centers. Libya has been divided among rival administrations and militias, leading to a major lack of centralized and weak law enforcement. The Government of National Unity (GNU) has previously cooperated with the European Union (EU) to tackle irregular migration. Furthermore, numerous reports by the GNU indicate that state-backed security forces operate detention centers, sued by systematic abuse.

Pushbacks and Neglect by European States in Greece & Italy ([HRW 2025](#))

The European borders are in control of operations which have led to accusations of illegal “pushbacks”; forcing migrants who reside in a vulnerable state to return to unsafe conditions in a conflicted environment. European countries were held liable for not even reviewing asylum cases, but rather strengthening their own policies on protection. As a result, migrants face abuse and denial of asylum procedures, which prioritize political interests over basic humanitarian rights. This has been shown through investigations done by the United Nations and NGOs (2023), proving that the Hellenic Coast Guard in Greece was involved in returning asylum seekers to Turkey, “leaving them out to dry”, abandoning them at sea. Additionally, we will give an in-depth look at the highlighted factors that demonstrate the absence of human rights within the Mediterranean region:

- **Humanitarian factor:** Many asylum seekers, including children and young adults, face the extreme migration conditions inside the Central Mediterranean Route. Due to the denial



of safe disembarkation in European territories, many embarkations sink when overloading occurs, and the poor conditions they travel in to reach their final destination.

- Legal factor: Pushbacks that showcase neglect by European States have led to the violation of international refugee law (1951 Refugee Convention). This illustrates how the migrants have a legal argument towards the unwillingness of the government to accept the reality of this escalating crisis.
- Economic factor: Many European nations prioritize directing their funds towards securing their borders over humanitarian operations. They are closing their doors to people fleeing conflict and poverty to ensure the “security” of their own. Avoiding the issue while worsening it at the same time.
- Geopolitical factors: The rising geopolitical tensions lying within frontline states— including Italy, Greece, and northern EU member states such as Germany and France expose the disclosure of migration burdens and the division of political interest delay unified humanitarian factors.

Current Situation

“The Central Mediterranean route witnessed the biggest increase in the first two months of the year, up 48% year-on-year to almost 6 900. This made it the second most active migratory route to the EU” (reliefweb.com). As the information proves, in 2025, migration along the Central Mediterranean migration Route (CMR) remains one of the most complex humanitarian and political crises faced by the world regarding migration. The route between North Africa and Italy remains the most heavily trafficked route this year, accounting for roughly 39% of all crossings. Even though a decrease in the migration tendency as a whole is imminent, there is still a 7% increase from last year in the Central Mediterranean migration Route ([Frontex, 2025](https://frontex.europa.eu)). In contrast, other migration routes, such as the Western African route, have recorded a 33% drop due to enhanced maritime patrols and changing smuggling patterns ([Frontex, 2025](https://frontex.europa.eu)). This demonstrates the efforts regarding this region by successful NGOs, governments, and international organizations; despite past efforts shown, this does not target the problem directly,



since there's a lack of legislation, established relations between European and African nations, and human rights protection (violence and torture).

Further expanding on the topic, a recent case occurred on January 23rd of 2026, where twin sisters, both being 1 year olds, were lost at sea in an attempt to cross the Mediterranean Sea with their final objective being Italy. According to CTV News, the group realizing this migration was about 61 individuals, of which 3 were lost at sea, the twins, and a man who died during this path. Another important fact to highlight about this occurrence is that aboard the raft that landed on Lampedusa, Italy, on the 23rd, 22 passengers were “unaccompanied minors” ([CTV News, 2026](#)). “In the absence of regular and safe routes, those seeking a possible future in Europe by crossing the Mediterranean continue to risk their lives on dangerous and often deadly journeys, as evidenced by the more than 33,300 people who have died or gone missing at sea since 2024,” said Save the Children ([Save the Children, 2017](#)). On the positive spectrum, NGOs such as Save the Children and the International Rescue Committee (ICR) work daily to tackle this issue, addressing all types of situations and assisting with this labor across the international community. Of course, the work of these organizations does not go unnoticed, yet the real issue is not being solved. Questions such as, why have not established controlled migration laws and corridors to assist migrants? Why not solve problems inside departing countries and avoid migration in the first place? Why has there not been laser-focused attention on this region, establishing safe grounds to avoid conflict? Working on goals 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and 17 (Partnership for the Goals) of the United Nations to improve this region's way of living. Regarding this conflict on an international level, it has been left aside on international agendas for a while now. The region of West Africa has been stained by crime and violence. The UN data estimated 13.6 million people forcibly displaced or stateless in 2024, about 10 % of the world's total migration ([UNHRC, 2024](#)). This showcases the urgency of this issue, not only on the side of migration but also in securing stability and safety for the entire region, making sure that families do not have to leave their home country forcibly just to be safe.



Bloc Positions

Western African Bloc

The Western African Bloc consists of the prioritization of those citizens who migrate outside of their own borders. These blocs highly insist on reforms and stronger anti-trafficking measures to ensure safety for migrants in transit countries. These nations look for development assistance, arguing that economic instability is a primary cause of migration. The Western African Bloc strongly supports legal migration pathways, suggesting help from NGOs and governments to ensure human rights standards.

European (EU) Bloc

The European Bloc looks to strengthen border management across the Mediterranean, wishing for the regulation of irregular migration. The EU widely supports asylum reform, even though states differ on burden-sharing. They promote regional cooperation among the North African and Middle Eastern countries (to manage migration flows during crisis). The EU countries actively work on balancing humanitarian commitments with domestic security and political pressures. These countries have the additional responsibility of reducing harmful stereotypes against certain races that have been normalized.

Middle East & North African Bloc

The Middle East & North African Bloc emphasizes national sovereignty, resisting external pressure regarding migration policies. These countries advocate strongly for international financial support, due to major transit in host regions. Additionally, these countries strive for joint security cooperation among the Mediterranean countries to reduce irregular migration and trafficking. The Middle East & North African Bloc recognizes transit countries, being highly affected due to the instability and conflict in migration patterns.

Global Partners/ International Community Bloc

The Global Partners have the objective of protecting human rights, providing humanitarian aid, and monitoring migration. They encourage multilateral solutions involving origin, transit, and destination countries. They support capacity-building programs for asylum seekers, ensuring law enforcement and anti-trafficking efforts. The Global Partners aid those



countries in need through alliances, specifically the transit countries (Middle East & North African Bloc countries), transitioning from this global crisis to international cooperation.

Possible Solutions

This section, “possible solutions,” will discuss the potential strategies according to their final objective: addressing the persistent human rights violations and exploitation along the Central Mediterranean migration Route (CMR). By further exploring different approaches to the situation—categorized by humanitarian protection, monitors, and sanctions—delegates from the UNHRC committee will recognize how the nations can respond and contribute to the persistent crisis. These solutions have the objective of guiding the debate, promoting cooperation between countries, and inspiring innovative proposals that take into consideration the high demand for the protection of human dignity and safety.

The first option, we as chairs, upon proposing: **Strengthening Humanitarian Protection and Legal Migration Pathways**. According to the European External Action Service, it involves efforts to provide safe legal migration pathways, including the protection of vulnerable individuals. These are saved from exploitation and violence, while legal migration pathways are aimed to offer safe alternatives to irregular migration (eeas.eu). With a Humanitarian Protection and Legal Migration Pathway, there will be measures such as the creation and expansion of a humanitarian corridor, followed by increased asylum procedures for all. Moreover, stronger search and rescue operations for the Central Mediterranean migration Route (CMR) could be applied. The objective of this strong approach is to reduce dangerous smuggling networks. While facing several challenges such as political resistance and border control, it will be up to the delegates to decide which nations are more suitable for the pathway, which nations could contribute, and where the economic and source aid will be provided from.

For the second option for delegates in the UNHRC committee, we suggest: **Monitoring and Sanctions Against Exploitation Networks**. This approach focuses rather on strengthening accountability mechanisms, used to combat exploitation and human trafficking. This solution includes the expansion of independent monitoring of detention centers, as well as supporting international investigations more often. Moreover, nations should focus on creating targeted



sanctions on individuals and groups held responsible for the said human right violation acts. The main challenge for this solution will be the limited access to conflict zones. Due to weak national institutions and political instability, there's no strong political will from member states, which does not hold violators accountable.

Both approaches highlight the complexity of the Central Mediterranean migration Route crisis, highlighting the lack of humanitarian protection, while the need to hold accountable those mechanisms and targeting the root causes of exploitation and abuse. It is essential to carefully evaluate the role of states, international organizations, and transit countries– the objective is to strengthen global governance and improve international cooperation in a crisis, with a result that affects the world.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer

Purpose: The following questions are created to guide delegates in the UNHRC committee on their research and solution proposals regarding the extreme human rights violations and exploitation along the Central Mediterranean migration Route (CMR).

1. How would continued inaction towards deaths at sea, human trafficking, and regional instability in both transit and destination countries affect migrants?
2. In what ways would the failure to act undermine international human rights law and the credibility of the United Nations?
3. What previous actions, resolutions, and/or investigations have the UNHRC or the broader UN system taken regarding migrants' rights and human trafficking in the Central Mediterranean migration Route?
4. How can Member States strengthen the protection of migrants' human rights while maintaining national security and border control?
5. What role should humanitarian corridors, legal migration pathways, and asylum systems play in reducing irregular migration and exploitation?
6. What forms of international cooperation are necessary to address the root causes of migration, such as conflict, economic instability, and climate change?



Works Cited

Burns H. Weston was the Bessie Dutton Murray Distinguished Professor of

Law and Associate Dean for International and Comparative Legal Studies at the University of Iowa, Iowa City. He was coauthor of Human... “International Human Rights: Prescription and Enforcement.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., 23 Oct. 2025, www.britannica.com/topic/human-rights/The-Universal-Declaration-of-Human-Rights.

Central Mediterranean Route - EEAS,

www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/central_med_route_ed1_2.pdf. Accessed 3 Dec. 2025.

Di Giacomo, Flavio. “Mediterranean Shipwreck Sounds Alarm for Lifesaving Action |

International Organization for Migration.” *IOM UN Migration*, 19 Dec. 2023, www.iom.int/news/mediterranean-shipwreck-sounds-alarm-lifesaving-action.

Evans, Gareth. “Europe’s Migrant Crisis: The Year That Changed A Continent.” *BBC News*,

BBC, 30 Aug. 2020, www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-53925209#.

Frelick, Bill. “A Landmark Ruling on Greek Border Pushbacks.” *Human Rights Watch*, 21 Jan.

2025, www.hrw.org/news/2025/01/21/landmark-ruling-greek-border-pushbacks.

Hovring, Roald. “10 Things You Should Know about the Deadliest Migration Route ...”

NRC, NRC, 20 Mar. 2024,

www.nrc.no/feature/2024/10-things-you-should-know-about-the-Central-Mediterranean-migration-route.

“Human Rights Council.” *Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights*, 2024,

www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/home.



“Libya Detention Centres Remain Places of Violations and Abuse: Experts | UN News.”
United Nations

Nations, United Nations, 28 Mar. 2022, news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1114842.

Mignst, Karen. “Refugee | Definition, History, & Facts | Britannica.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9 Nov. 2025, www.britannica.com/topic/refugee.

Moller, Adam Jacobi. “The 2015 European Refugee Crisis: A Perspective on Preparedness in Text and Photo.” *Global Campus of Human Rights*, 10 Aug. 2020, www.gchumanrights.org/preparedness/the-2015-european-refugee-crisis-a-perspective-on-preparedness-in-text-and-photo/#:~:text=In%202015%20a%20flow%20of,and%20we%20all%20knew%20it.

Union, European. “Frontex: Monthly Irregular Migration Statistics - February 2025 - World.” *ReliefWeb*, 18 Mar. 2025, reliefweb.int/report/world/frontex-monthly-irregular-migration-statistics-february-2025.

Young, Grace. “Libya Revolt of 2011 | History, War, Timeline, & Map | Britannica.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2025, www.britannica.com/event/Libya-Revolt-of-2011.