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## **Essay Competition Winners**

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We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to everyone and every organisation that contributed to the success of **Summer School: Security and/or Human Rights 2025**, which took place in **Mardin**, and to those who participated in the essay competition after the summer school. This would not have been possible without the support, dedication, and cooperation of all involved.

First and foremost, we extend our sincere thanks to the **FNF Human Rights Hub in Geneva** for their unwavering support and for their valuable partnership and collaboration throughout this initiative. Their contributions have been critical in ensuring the success of this year's Summer School.

A special thank you goes to the **Human Rights Academy**, whose commitment and efforts made this event a reality. We are also deeply grateful to **FNF Türkiye** for their ongoing support and for being an essential part of this journey.

We would also like to extend our warmest thanks to all the participants for their dedication and engagement, and to our esteemed lecturers for sharing their valuable knowledge and expertise.

We acknowledge the energy and passion everyone brought to the table; without your enthusiasm, this initiative would not have been as meaningful or successful.



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Following the 5th International Summer School on Security and/or Human Rights in Mardin, Türkiye, we organised an essay competition for participants. The winners of the essay competition were awarded the opportunity to visit the FNF Human Rights Hub in Geneva and participate in the 14th UN Forum on Business and Human Rights.



Rafael Mendonça,  
Brazil, Alumni '25

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## DEFENDING PEACE, SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS: THE DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF OUR GENERATION

BY NANGOH MASEKE HUFFNAGEL

On the day I fled my homeland due to the outbreak of the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon, in my pockets were three items: an old identity card, a copy of admission letters and the profound, silent imprint of fear. My father, a man who served in the National Gendarmerie of Cameroon for over three decades, had become a tragic example that service does not immunise a person from suspicion. In the eyes of the state, he could teach insurgents, while in the eyes of the Anglophone separatists, he might betray them. Caught in the middle of bullets and unfounded accusations, our family's safety suddenly came to an end. Crossing borders and switching legal categories (becoming an asylum seeker) has shaped everything I have learned so far about security, peace, and the business of human rights.

The statement "*We the peoples of the United Nations, determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war...*" happens to be the preamble of the United Nations Charter. Interestingly, this statement is not a cliché in some textbook; it is, in fact, the promise that should have protected my father and my family. Promises made without the political will to fulfil them always become nothing more than just words. Article 3 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "*Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person,*" is crystal clear and simple. However, for the many people who cross borders due to war, persecution, etc., these words are not abstractions to them. In reality, they urgently need this protection, which most often arrives too late or not at all.

To understand why we fall short, moral clarity and legal literacy are essential. The Refugee Convention of 1951 and its 1967 protocol provide the world with a clear definition of who a refugee is and impose a single, indivisible legal obligation: the principle of Non-refoulement. This principle prohibits returning a person to a country where their life or freedom would be threatened. This document also specifies an array of rights a refugee is entitled to, ranging from access to education and the courts to protection from punitive restrictions. However, there is a presumption of identification: "*until a person is recognised as a refugee, she or he remains an asylum seeker.*" This



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distinction is quite technical, however, it is highly consequential. A refugee is entitled to a set of internationally recognised protections, whereas an asylum seeker in limbo (a state of uncertainty) usually has access to fewer or lesser protections. Hence, rendering asylum seekers vulnerable to detention, marginalisation, and exploitation. For example, according to a news article published in 2024 on [The Guardian](#), fifty-three asylum seekers were pushed back into the UN-patrolled buffer zone.

Here is the human story behind the legalities, in Accra – Ghana I was admitted to the University Of Ghana School Of Law. I was full of a mix of great happiness and humiliation because I was admitted as an international student rather than a refugee in Ghana. When I asked why, I was made to understand that I could not have access to the reduced tuition fee for recognised refugees because I am an asylum seeker, not a refugee. In the words of one of the administrators, he said, *“When you are a refugee, we will treat you like a Ghanaian for tuition purposes. Until then, you are required to pay full foreign fees.”* It is important to note that the tuition fee for foreigners was over \$ 5,000. Where is an asylum seeker expected to get that \$5000 in Ghana? I lived with this for months while working as a teacher to keep food on the table. Employers usually preferred hiring asylum seekers because they could be easily exploited. Many employers contemptuously and pragmatically relied on the fact that the state’s uncertainty about our status left us without the necessary legal muscle to confidently demand minimum wages or contracts. Asylum seekers are practically disposable labourers. For people who have succeeded in escaping man-made violence, the second phase of violence, which happens to be the slow violence of poverty and humiliation, usually does the most damage to human dignity.

What is the reason for drawing a sharp line between asylum seekers and refugees? The legal reason for this is clearly to determine whether the person meets the criteria set by the convention. However, the political reason is deeper. Admitting refugees also involves bearing certain obligations, such as financial, social, and sometimes political, which is why some states are reluctant to admit refugees. The moral answer to which I keep returning is blunt and human: our policies and laws continue to treat those in need of protection as an administrative problem rather than as persons with rights, untapped contributions and histories. The UNHCR makes it clear that seeking asylum is a human right and that asylum seekers are people in need of protection. Nevertheless, the existing gap between principle and practice is wide.



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There are three interconnected truths our generation must accept if we are to defend peace, security, and human rights for future generations. The first truth is that any security that excludes human rights is brittle and breakable. The second truth is that human rights without structural and institutional peacebuilding will be mere aspirations with little impact. And the third truth is that any migration governance method that relies on exclusion, deterrence, and delay will continue to reproduce instability rather than put an end to it.

Based on personal experience, I dare to propose a framework of political, legal and civic duties our generation must shoulder.

- Fortify human dignity at the outset of asylum: the legal distinction between the terms refugee and asylum seeker should not be an excuse to deny people in need of protection access to the minimum standards of protection. At a minimum, asylum seekers must have a sure access to emergency healthcare, basic education especially for children, legal aid for asylum applicants and of course protection from labour exploitation. These protections in the aforementioned are not luxuries; rather, they are essential protections that sustain life and human security while a determination is pending. The Geneva 1951 Convention and human rights treaties provide a solid basis for upholding these protections. Countries must integrate them into domestic procedures that are timely, transparent and, above all, fair.
- Fairness, speed and transparency in asylum adjudication: It is no doubt that delay could sometimes be a form of punishment especially in situations where protection is delayed for the person in need of protection. The longer a person stays in a state of legal uncertainty or legal limbo, the more likely they might fall prey to exploitation. The administration's backlogs are not mere bureaucratic failures; they are, in fact, human rights violations. I learned this in my education in international law. Most especially, my lived experience taught me that a fair and speedy determination process, coupled with interim protections, helps reduce human suffering and strengthens social cohesion in the host communities or countries.
- Economic inclusion as a strategy for reintegration of displaced persons: excluding asylum seekers from formal labour protections is awkward, unreasonable and perverse in nature. When people are denied access to decent work, they either survive in the informal economy under risky conditions or they become prey to criminal networks. Economic inclusion through the right to work, recognition of qualifications, and enforceable labour standards transforms migrants into formal and active contributors to host countries. As a teacher in Accra, I can say with confidence that everyone benefits from inclusion.



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- Reconnect divided communities and normalise human borders: living in North Cyprus during my undergraduate studies, while my sister lived on the south side, we met for four years over a few meters of no man's land and a mobile phone. During those days, my sister and I would stand at the borders of both sides of the island of Cyprus and make video calls while waving at each other. It was indeed pathetic. Border regimes that treat human relationships as collateral damage are morally bankrupt. Regimes should encourage and facilitate family reunification, regulated mobility and humanitarian crossings. In a nutshell, borders should be managed, not weaponised.

Standing on a normative foundation, I dare to argue that our generation must practice the moral grammar embedded in the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration. The Charter tasks us to save and protect "succeeding generations from the scourge of war", while the Universal Declaration of Human Rights emphasises the right to life and security. It is necessary for this text to be seen beyond ceremonial citations. In fact, they should shape and direct our policymaking. For example, when a state budgets education for displaced children as part of its asylum procedures, it is answering that founding promise. Interestingly, laws and declarations cannot do the heavy lifting alone. There is a civic duty that only we, as a people or communities, must do. It is necessary for us to fight against the social narratives that take away the dignity of the migrants. Refrain from treating asylum seekers as burdens.

The concept of security in itself must be reimagined by us. Security policies that prioritise state security over human rights create perverse motives for repression and militarisation. A human-focused security policy will not view migrants as threats to be dealt with. Rather, it will determine success by the rights protected, the lives secured, and, of course, the grievances addressed. Hence, it will see migrants as people whose protection is a necessary condition for long-term peace.

In a nutshell, the act of defending peace, security, and human rights for future generations is less about "grand strategy" than about protecting these values. It is more about our everyday choices. We can find it in the rule of law that is fair and efficient. It can be seen in the university policies that welcome rather than exclude. It can be seen in the labour markets when employers refrain from exploiting vulnerable migrants. It can also be seen in communities that integrate rather than isolate migrants.



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I have walked these painful yet insightful journeys in hospital corridors where men whispered their traumas, in classrooms where children were taught English and Social Studies by an asylum seeker who could barely pay his rent, borderlines where my sister and I, for 4 years, stood a few meters apart and talked on video calls with our phones and waved at each other. These are not stories to spark sympathy; they are evidence and a lived experience of myself and possibly millions out there. This lived experience highlights the wide human rights gap and the urgent need to close it.

The task before us is huge and tough. It requires a change in policy, budgetary commitments, litigation, and a profound cultural shift. My generation must remember that the generations we are determined to save will be named by the choices we make today. If my generation truly intends to leave a world where peace is real, security is inclusive, and rights are lived, not prayed for, as an inheritance for the future generation, then my generation must act in ways that are accountable, empathetic, and resilient.

As a final thought, I leave you with an African saying: "*Land is not owned by the living alone, but by the dead, the living, and the unborn.*" In the same way, the world belongs to us all, past, present and future. Immigrants and asylum seekers are not outsiders; they are humans, part of this shared legacy, and deserve the same dignity and respect as anyone else. This is the duty I accept, and it is the obligation I extend to you.



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## ORGANISED CRIME AND MULTIDIMENSIONAL SECURITY: A LIBERAL ANALYSIS ON PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN BRAZIL AND SOUTH AMERICA

BY RAFAEL MENDONÇA

The defence of peace, security, and human rights for future generations constitutes one of the founding commitments of the contemporary international order. The Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations explicitly affirms the determination to “*save succeeding generations from the scourge of war*,” a call for intergenerational responsibility that echoes the human catastrophe of the first half of the twentieth century. Complementarily, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in its Article 3, affirms that “*everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person*,” establishing a universal normative principle that ought to guide state action. More recently, the Declaration on Future Generations, adopted at the Summit of the Future in 2024, recognised that the actions and omissions of present generations produce multiplier effects over time, and that the promotion of peace, dignity, and the rule of law constitutes the most effective path to safeguard individual interests within an intergenerational pact for peace.

Against this backdrop, this essay examines a particularly grave challenge for South America, and especially for Brazil: organised crime. It argues that criminal factions represent the principal threat to peace, security, and human rights in the region, as they erode institutions, perpetuate cycles of violence, exploit social vulnerabilities, degrade the environment, and weaken the national sovereignty of several states.

It further contends that the rigorous confrontation of organised crime must be understood as an essential component of a liberal agenda for the defence of freedom. Security and liberty are not, therefore, competing values but mutually dependent dimensions: there can be no freedom without security, and a form of security that destroys liberties would be incompatible with human dignity.

From this premise, the essay will be organised into four parts: first, it examines the evolution of the concept of security toward a multidimensional perspective; second, it demonstrates how organised crime simultaneously compromises different dimensions of this security, from physical integrity to climate balance, from institutional resilience



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to the protection of migrants; third, it discusses how the necessity of firm measures against organized crime brings to the fore the debate on a supposed conflict between security and liberty, showing that, from a liberal perspective, these values are not mutually exclusive but are instead reinforced by each other in a narrative of decisive confrontation against criminality; finally, it reaffirms intergenerational responsibility as a normative foundation that requires a firm stance against organized crime, in defense of peace, security, and human rights for the future.

### The Evolution of the Concept of Security

For centuries, the concept of security was associated almost exclusively with the military dimension and with the protection of states against external threats. The logic of the balance of power, then predominant in the international system, treated security as synonymous with territorial defence. However, the second half of the twentieth century and the end of the Cold War shifted this paradigm, broadening the scope of concerns and the range of actors involved. Emma Rothschild, in her seminal article *What is Security?*, identifies the emergence of what she terms “extended security,” characterised by four movements of expansion.

The first, in a top-down direction, shifts the focus from the state to the individual, recognising that people's security is as important as border security. The second expands the scale beyond the national, incorporating the international system and the biosphere as objects of protection. The third broadens the relevant dimensions, moving beyond the military sphere to include economic, social, environmental, and political aspects. The fourth, finally, decentralises responsibility, ceasing to be the state's monopoly and becoming shared with international organisations, local governments, civil society, and even the private sector.

This multisectoral conception of security, synthesised in the concept of “human security,” was consecrated by the 1994 UNDP Human Development Report. Security, from this perspective, means protecting people against chronic threats such as hunger, health problems, and the harmful effects of environmental degradation, as well as against disruptions that endanger human life on a daily basis. It is a paradigm that links security to human dignity, approximating it to the very notion of human rights.



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Organised crime in Brazil clearly illustrates the importance of understanding security in multidimensional terms. Armed violence, institutional fragility, and the dynamics of criminal factions cannot be explained solely through a military lens, as they generate effects that also unfold in the economic, social, and environmental spheres. Thus, the insecurity produced by organised crime transcends sectoral boundaries and reaches multiple aspects of collective life. The concept of multidimensional security, therefore, provides the analytical framework necessary to grasp the complexity of the South American challenge, with Brazil as a key case of reference.

### Organised Crime as the Destruction of Multidimensional Security

Organised crime in Brazil constitutes today the main threat to peace, security, and human rights, with devastating effects manifested in multiple dimensions. A 2024 study by a Brazilian research organisation found that 11% of Brazilians (23 million people) live in territories controlled by criminal factions. Another study, from 2025 and employing a different methodology, concluded that about 26% of the population (50 million people) live under such conditions, reinforcing the existence of “parallel states” within national borders.

Recent surveys indicate that there are at least 88 active criminal organisations, which control much of the prison system: in São Paulo, about 70% of inmates are linked to the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC), while in Rio de Janeiro the percentage is similar in relation to the Comando Vermelho (CV). Due to the territorial wars between factions and confrontations between security forces and criminal groups, Brazil has accumulated approximately 1 million homicides over the last twenty years – a figure higher than that of many international armed conflicts in the same period. This violence, often marked by the use of war-grade weaponry and guerrilla tactics such as the construction of barricades in urban areas to block access by security forces, undermines state presence, erodes social trust, and imposes a daily life of fear and systematic violations of basic rights, with implications that extend across different dimensions of social life.

The economic dimension reinforces this corrosive power. Drug trafficking, although central in the public imagination, accounts for less than 10% of faction revenues. It is estimated that organised crime moves more than R\$ 300 billion annually, through activities ranging from cell phone theft and resale to cybercrime, from the smuggling of fuels, beverages, and cigarettes to the illegal extraction of gold. This economic power is



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further connected to institutional infiltration: factions invest in the training of lawyers and in the placement of members in judicial and administrative careers, in a strategy that directly threatens the independence of the justice system and democratic governance. Increasingly, these groups also penetrate the formal economy, laundering illicit funds even through fintechs and public transport companies. Institutional capture is therefore part of the modus operandi of these organisations, which seek to weaken state control mechanisms and expand their operational margins.

Yet the impact on fundamental elements of national security is not limited to urban violence or the illegal economy. In the Amazon, the connection between criminal factions and environmental degradation is evident. Approximately one-third of the municipalities located in the Amazônia Legal (a region defined by law for the planning and development of the Brazilian Amazon) are under the influence of criminal organisations, which use river networks as strategic logistical corridors for drug trafficking and rely on some 200 clandestine airstrips within the forest for illicit transport.

In addition, illegal gold mining and land grabbing associated with deforestation have become central sources of revenue, fueling a cycle of violence and environmental degradation in which organised crime plays a central role in pressuring the Amazon biome. These processes, however, are not restricted to the region: they intensify the effects of the climate crisis, increase the frequency of extreme weather events, and generate direct risks to public health. Such risks are exacerbated by persistent infrastructural deficiencies in South America, particularly in basic sanitation, sewage collection and treatment, and the low urban resilience to flooding. These structural weaknesses magnify the impacts of extreme climate events and increase population vulnerability to waterborne diseases. Thus, organised crime, by exploiting predatory activities, amplifies climate insecurity and undermines public health, showing how environmental degradation and social insecurity are deeply interconnected.

Finally, the Venezuelan migratory crisis represents a potential opportunity for instrumentalization by criminal factions, adding a critical dimension to regional insecurity and to the protection of human rights and fundamental guarantees. Since 2015, about 8 million people have left Venezuela, with Colombia being the main destination, hosting approximately 2.8 million refugees and migrants. In Brazil, this flow became more acute in 2018, when the massive arrival of migrants in the state of Roraima revealed the fragility of local infrastructure and highlighted how the vulnerability of migrants could be



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instrumentalised by criminal networks. The lack of documentation and barriers to insertion into the formal labour market increase the risk that these groups may be exploited in practices such as human trafficking, forced labour, or other illicit activities. In this sense, confronting organised crime also means reducing these vulnerabilities, protecting the human rights of migrants, and preventing their fragile condition from becoming an opportunity for criminal factions.

It is clear, therefore, that organised crime in Brazil is not merely a problem of public security, but a systemic threat that undermines multiple aspects of social life. By corroding physical, economic, environmental, and social security, factions weaken national sovereignty, perpetuate exclusion, and magnify intergenerational risks. It is a threat that transcends sectoral boundaries, imposing itself as a central obstacle to the consolidation of peace, security, and human rights on the South American continent.

### **The Relationship Between Security and Liberty from a Liberal Perspective**

The debate on the relationship between liberty and security, although present long before, intensified after the September 11, 2001 attacks, when public discourse increasingly embraced the rhetoric of the need to guarantee security, even through exceptional measures. Didier Bigo, in *Delivering Liberty and Security? The Reframing of Freedom When Associated with Security* argues that such a logic can corrode democratic foundations by normalising the state of exception and expanding permanent surveillance practices.

However, it is mistaken to conceive liberty and security as opposing values. The liberal tradition recognises that the protection of life and physical integrity is a precondition for the exercise of freedoms, and that without liberty, security itself degenerates into oppression. The task of democratic states is, therefore, to articulate these two values in a complementary way, avoiding the pursuit of security that eliminates the very rights that grant it legitimacy.

In South America, and especially in Brazil, this dilemma manifests itself in a particularly acute manner. The power of criminal factions requires firm responses, but the continent's history warns against the risks of state abuses. The liberal vision proposes a synthesis: security must be guaranteed to protect liberties, and liberties must be preserved to prevent the pursuit of security from turning into tyranny. This requires the design of clear legal mechanisms, the strengthening of institutional checks, and the assurance of transparency in the adoption of exceptional measures. In other words,



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the fight against organised crime must be carried out firmly, but always within democratic parameters. Thus, confronting factions is not only compatible with the defence of liberty but constitutes its very precondition.

This reflection dialogues with John Locke's thought in the Second Treatise of Civil Government. Locke sustains that the state exists to preserve life, liberty, and property, and that when hostile forces challenge civil order, a state of "quasi-war" is established, in which political power has the duty to act to restore normality. Brazil lives in many territories, a situation that approximates this description: the domination of communities by armed factions, the use of urban combat tactics, and threats to the integrity of institutions configure a true state of quasi-war.

In this context, it is possible to admit the temporary suspension of certain individual guarantees of faction members, as already suggested in national debates on the "direito penal do inimigo" (a doctrine that allows the suspension of guarantees for those who gravely threaten the state). It is necessary, however, to establish limits: suspension must be temporary, restricted, and guided by clear criteria, and supervised by the Judiciary and the Legislature. The aim is not to weaken the values that underpin liberal democracy, but to preserve the conditions of liberty for society as a whole. As Locke reminds us, liberty is only possible within a functional state. When civil order is under threat, extraordinary measures may be justified to safeguard the liberal order and protect human rights and fundamental guarantees.

## Conclusion

In sum, confronting organised crime is a necessary condition for consolidating peace, security, and the protection of human rights in South America. Security, conceived in a multidimensional key, cannot be reduced to the coercive apparatus but must encompass the defence of institutions, environmental protection, migratory governance, and the safeguarding of individual liberties and human rights.

In this framework, firm measures against criminal organisations prove compatible with a liberal agenda, provided they are guided by clear legal parameters and subject to democratic oversight. The central challenge is to combine the exceptional measures required to combat factions operating in a quasi-war context with the preservation of the guarantees that structure the liberal order. Only from this synthesis will it be possible to ensure for future generations an institutional environment that is stable, socially secure, and politically free.



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## WHO ARE WE?

### Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom Türkiye Office:



The Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, established in 1958, promotes liberal values through political education in Germany and abroad. Since 1991, FNF has been working in Türkiye with partners from civil society, academia, business, and politics. Given Türkiye's historical and strategic importance to Germany, Europe, and the transatlantic region, FNF supports liberal-minded individuals and organizations to help foster a more liberal, democratic, and prosperous society. The Foundation's office, initially in Ankara, moved to Istanbul in 2002, continuing its mission of promoting liberal values across Türkiye.

### Human Rights Academy:



The Human Rights Academy was founded in 2020 to institutionalize human rights courses and form a regular structure through the cooperation of civil society and academia. A Consultative Committee composed of experts has been established. The Academy aims to fill the gaps left by undergraduate or graduate education in human rights through various activities, to advance and disseminate human rights knowledge in Turkey, and to provide human rights education to individuals working in various fields who need this training.

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## Impressum

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**FNF Human Rights Hub:**



In 2023, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation established a Human Rights Hub in Geneva. As a hub for the Foundation's human rights work, it strengthens respect for and compliance with human rights and promotes the rules-based international legal order. The hub connects human rights defenders and civil society organizations with each other and with UN organizations in Geneva.

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