

**AMERICAS CAUCUS**  
**Topic C: Settling Methods of Containment during**  
**Civil Unrest**

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# Background Information

## **Introduction**

Human right violations and the inability of nations providing a stable social security system has been a growing and ongoing issue within many countries around the world but is mainly popular within the regions of North and South America. Almost every country within the Latin America is suffering due to the issue of both, the riots caused due to civic unhappiness and the violent oppression caused by the authorities of each of the countries in the region of the Americas. Venezuela, Brasil, and Argentina are the three main countries that are within the use of violence to repress any type of peaceful pacific demonstration. During the last few months, a wave of public demonstrations and riots have emerged due to civic unhappiness giving the opportunity for some countries to oppressed violently their own citizens even with the use of deadly force. A pattern can be observed if the authorities' response of different countries is compared leaving only one conclusion: nations are not prepared to handle these types of situations responsibly.

Human rights violations are not new to Latin America; some nations that form the international community have abusing and taking advantage of power, especially with records of totalitarian governments. From 1964 to 1985 one of the most important countries in Brasil went through an obscure phase in which the government was constituted by a military dictatorship. This time period in Brasil was characterized by the immense blood shed of Protestants and tortures performed by branches of the military supposed to provide public safety. During the dictatorship, branches of the authorities that exist today were created. In 1966 the military police received one of its first calls in the city of São Paulo. In 1970, "Rondas Ostensivas Tobias de Aguiar" (ROTA) was created to protect civilians, however both of these branches were controlled by the military government and did not respected or provided public safety due to their biased commanders. Torture and kidnapping were famous activities in which these branched of the social security system at that time took part of.

Several similar episodes such as the one mentioned in Brasil have taken place in other parts of the American continent. From 1973 to 1990 Chile was “ruled” by Augusto Pinochet which came to power through the wiles of a military coup, overthrowing the democratically elected government of Salvador Allende. As Pinochet was in power through the 17 years of his government, at least 3.197 individuals were prosecuted and 1192 others were missing. It is estimated that the real number of individuals assassinated by Pinochet riot police and military members is about 50,000 individuals. As well as Brasil and Chile, Argentina faced an obscure period of time in which it was under establishment of a totalitarian government from 1976 to 1983. It is estimated that of all of the illegally prosecuted, 21% were students, 1, 6% were journalists, and 30% were workers. People were beat down on the street and violently kidnapped to clandestine detention camps in which people were tortured and murdered.

### **Public manifestations 2013-2014**

Violence used by the authorities who are responsibly to control riots is necessary for some of the Latin American government to remain on power. Nowadays two main episodes of police brutality and incorrect use of force took place in two nations: Venezuela and Brasil. In both of the episodes, police enforcement used



malicious tactics such as beat downs, deadly fire power, toxic gas, etc., to prevent the peaceful manifestation to take place. Just in Venezuela more than thirty five people were assassinated in the peaceful manifestations that started February 4 2014, led by the opposition. That group of more than thirty five individuals were either beat to death, assassinated by headshots, or either missing. These acts were left unpunished and were defended by the current president of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro, alleging that the

“Guardia Nacional Bolivariana” (GNB) was protecting themselves from violent activists who were by the words of the president, “trying to perform a coup against his government”. Moments after the first wave of protests, Maduro condemned them and informed that people should get a permit in order to go out in the streets and express their rights. Some speculation has been brought up in which stated that the government and the GNB are working with militia groups called: Los colectivos. These militia groups are known by possessing extremely heavy lethal fire power and having immunity to kill protesters as they please without even being prosecuted by the GNB, in fact in some cases they seem to be working side by side.

Brasil showed similarities with Venezuela; people were going into the streets with the purpose of a public demonstration. About two hundred thousand civilians flooded the streets of twelve state capitals. Out of those twelve, seven were involved with disturbance and violence. Everything erupted when the cost of public transportation was raised, provoking the anger of millions of Brazilians, however this was just the superficial idea of the protests. Indignation towards the lack of security, lack of education, and corruption became the new focus of the protests. In both of the cases, besides students, journalists are the primary target to assault since it is best for the authorities to leave their violence uncovered. During the wave of protest more than 117 journalists were assaulted in Brasil and in Venezuela, the numbers go up to 137 journalists in total.

#### **OEA’s resolution towards the disturbances in Venezuela:**

After the situation in Venezuela ignited, the “Organización de Estados Americanos” (OEA), decided to take a stand and minimize the conflicts in the country giving support to the government as an attempt to guide it and stop the wave of protests by dialoguing with the opposition. Maria Corina Machado, an opposition leader in Venezuela, was given a Panamanian chair in the conference of the OEA in order to give speech and discuss the violent acts against citizens in the country. The session continued for two hours until a motion to make the session private was proposed by Nicaragua. Twenty two countries voted in favor and eleven voted against the proposal.

The delegation of Brasil decided to vote in favor in order to prevent that the session turned into a “show”.

**Countries that voted in favor for the session to become private:** Venezuela / Uruguay / Dominica / El Salvador / Granada / Haiti / Santa Lucia / Jamaica / Nicaragua / Dominican Republic / Surinam / Belize / Jamaica / Bolivia / Brasil / Ecuador / Guyana / Argentina / San Vicente y las Granadinas / Trinidad y Tobago / Saint Kitts / Bahamas.

**Countries that voted against the session being private:** Chile / Paraguay / Colombia / Peru / Costa Rica / Guatemala / México / Panamá / Canada / Honduras / United States

**Abstentions:** Barbados.

### Riot Police Equipment:

Tear gas;

Pepper spray;

Plastic bullets;

Helmets;

Moral effect grenades;

Armored control vehicle;

Water cannon vehicle;

Riot shields;

Batons;



## Timeline

**1964 -- 1985:** Military dictatorship in Brazil.

**1966:** Military police in Brazil received their first's assignments.

**1970:** ROTA was created.

**1973 --1990:** Augusto Pinochet military dictatorship in Chile.

**1976 – 1983:** Argentinian military dictatorship.

**Junho – Julho 2013:** Wave of protests in Brasil erupted

**March 21 2014:** A session in the OEA takes place in order to take a stand in relation towards protests and the violence of protests in Venezuela.

**February 4 2014:** Wave of protests in Venezuela erupted.

## Guiding Questions

- Should the armed groups responsible for monitoring and defending the population follow a political line of the party in government?
- What types of lethal or nonlethal weapons should be used to control the population of a given country?
- Taking into account the existence of the OAS (Organization of American States), should this organization have a direct intervention in controlling protests and armed forces of each country?
- After Analyzing recent episodes of protests and cases of violence, in different countries, should these governments be punished or prosecuted by their negligence of respecting the human rights of their citizens?
- Should some economic compensation be provided to the victims or the families of the victims?
- Can militarized police be managed by an impartial organization
- Can National Guard components be exterminated in every country?



## Further Research

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