



# AMMAN ACADEMY MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2026

United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC)



***Protecting Victims of Forced Criminality and Human Trafficking in  
Southeast Asia's Cyber-Scam Operations***

SEPTEMBER 17, 2026

AAMUN'26



Dear Delegates,

Regarding the use of ChatGPT in AAMUN'26, we will allow its usage as a **research engine only**. Please be aware that it was last updated on **June 2024**. Therefore, there is a high probability that it will provide you with incorrect information about the topic. If used, we encourage you to fact-check the information to prevent any issues throughout the debate.



## COMMITTEE

As the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), we remain gravely concerned about the ongoing human rights emergency that is occurring in the compound-based scam economy of Southeast Asia. Hundreds of thousands of people, from over sixty countries, are being trafficked, held against their will in several guarded compounds across Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and the Philippines. In those countries, they are being forced under the threat of violence to carry out online fraud, this includes romance and investment scams, targetting many victims worldwide. The UN has collected survivor testimonies and they describe beatings, electric shocks, sexual violence, food and sleep deprivation and solitary confinement behind wires and armed guards. The Council is committed to eliminating this crisis as a whole, and shifting it from a narrow cybercrime lens into a victim-centered HRC-based response. Hopefully ending the issue and restoring the dignity of its victims.



## INTRODUCTION

Southeast Asia has become a major centre for transnational cyber-scam operations, particularly in countries such as Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos. Since around 2021, criminal networks have increasingly recruited individuals through fraudulent job advertisements, promising legitimate employment before taking them to scam compounds often large buildings such as casinos, hotels, or office complexes where organized criminal groups run online fraud operations. Once there, victims may have their passports confiscated, be confined, threatened, or subjected to violence, while being forced to use phones and computers to carry out scams such as romance, investment, and cryptocurrency fraud. This is known as trafficking for forced criminality, as people are trafficked and compelled to commit crimes against their will. (OHCHR, 2023; UNODC, 2025)

The scale of these operations has expanded rapidly, with hundreds of thousands of people from dozens of countries reportedly being trafficked into scam centres. Victims can be forced to conduct romance scams, cryptocurrency fraud, investment scams, and other forms of cyber-enabled crime. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) identifies this as *trafficking in persons for the purpose of forced criminality*, highlighting the increasingly organized and transnational nature of these networks (UNODC, 2023).

The crisis has developed into a major human rights concern. The UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) has documented cases of torture, sexual abuse, food deprivation, forced labour, and confinement within scam compounds. Victims may also face difficulties receiving protection after escaping, particularly when authorities view them primarily as participants in criminal activity rather than as victims of trafficking (OHCHR, 2026).

Because these networks operate across borders and can relocate their compounds, individual states often struggle to address the issue alone. At the same time, governments face the challenge of dismantling criminal networks while protecting people who were forced into criminal activity. This places the issue directly within the mandate of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), as it involves fundamental rights, human trafficking, forced labour, and the protection of victims.

Delegates therefore need to consider how the international community can dismantle transnational cyber-scam networks while ensuring that victims of forced criminality



are identified, protected, rehabilitated, and given access to justice rather than punished for crimes they were compelled to commit. Delegates are required to draft a resolution that strengthens international cooperation against these networks, improves victim identification and protection, and establishes effective measures for rehabilitation and access to justice.

## TIMELINE

### **August 2022 to August 2023:**

Early rescues and early involvement of the United Nations. Over 2,700 foreign individuals who fell into trafficking schemes in Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia were freed from compounds between mid-2022 and mid-2023, as was reported by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). This is a first indication of the scale of forced labor associated with the scams. Around 220,000 people were kept against their will as forced laborers in scam centers in Cambodia and Myanmar, according to the August 2023 estimation provided by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

### **February 2024:**

Billions of dollars were lost by consumers. Investment scams (including "pig-butcher") schemes cost Americans approximately \$3.5 billion in 2023, as was calculated by the Federal Trade Commission. This number constitutes just one example of many losses incurred around the globe, which UN researchers estimate to be counted in the tens of billions of dollars per year.

March 2025: Confirmation of the global spread of victims by INTERPOL. Trafficking related to the Southeast Asian scam centers has already become a global problem, with INTERPOL stating that the victims come from sixty-six countries and that the recruitment networks supplying the compound are present in every continent.

### **May 2025: The human rights and humanitarian crises stated by UN researchers.**

In a joint statement, a group of UN Special Rapporteurs called for immediate and coordinated actions aimed at solving this human rights and humanitarian crisis, criticized regional states for their unwillingness to consider the victims as such but only as criminals, and warned that trafficking linked to Southeast Asian scam centers has now turned into a human rights and humanitarian crisis.

**Mid-2025: Financial and law enforcement actions**

Sanctions were placed against individuals involved with Cambodia's Prince Holding Group, and the CEO of Prince Group, Chen Zhi, was charged. The authorities seized the holdings of bitcoin related to the network worth billions of dollars. The U.S. Treasury expanded sanctions against the networks operating in Shwe Kokko, Myanmar, linked to the Border Guard Force affiliated with the Karen National Army, and additional targets in Cambodia due to the use of forced labor and violence to defraud Americans.

**October-November 2025: Myanmar's army raids KK Park**

The army of Myanmar conducted a very public raid on KK Park, which was known to be one of the largest scam parks in the region located between Thailand and Myanmar. The result of the operation was the arrest of more than 2,000 people and the seizure of many Starlink satellite internet terminals. During the following weeks, the army conducted raids on adjacent facilities, which led to the arrests of more than a thousand foreign nationals and the destruction of hundreds of buildings.

**November 2025 – January 2026: Screening, repatriation, and displacement indicators;**

Between late January and November 2025, Myanmar officials detained and conducted screenings of about 13,000 foreigners who entered Myanmar unlawfully in connection with the scam operations, and mostly deporting those to Thailand. At the same time, rights monitors and investigators noted the recruitment process for replacements continued freely on various social messaging sites, with displaced scam workers being relocated to other compound camps inside Myanmar and internationally.

**February 2026: OHCHR publishes A Wicked Problem report;**

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) issued a landmark report based on the trauma-informed survivors' interviews, estimating that around 300,000 people have been exploited through forced criminality in the Mekong Region. The report noted the use of torture, sexual abuse, forced abortions, and long-term imprisonment, and stressed that without a collaborative and rights-based response, the combination of the mentioned phenomena will keep growing.

**2026: Relocation and international attention;**

By mid-2026, satellite images and reports noted continuing the construction at locations like Shwe Kokko and KK Park in spite of the previous efforts against the criminal activity in the region, as well as that thousands of workers were still trapped in the camp facilities close to Myanmar and its border with Thailand. UNODC named the problem of forced criminality within scam operations one of the central problems in the 2026 World Day Against Trafficking in Person

## GENERAL OVERVIEW

The compound-based fraud ecosystem in Southeast Asia functions at the confluence of three intertwined crises – human trafficking, forced labor, and international cybercrime. It uses a business model based on criminal organizations recruiting people under false pretenses, seizing their travel papers after arrival, and forcing them, through violence and threats, to engage in internet-based fraud aimed at victims around the world. The most common types of schemes are romance investment (also known as “pig butchering”) operations and cryptocurrencies fraud.

From the geographical perspective, the compounds are located in areas where the power of the state is minimal or contested, such as Myanmar’s Karen and Shan States on the Thai border, Cambodia’s border and coastal special economic zones, and parts of Laos. Compounds operate under the protection of armed non-state groups and even local security forces, which makes the coordinated efforts of law enforcement agencies hard and allows operators to move their operations to another location in case of any troubles with one particular facility.

Inside the compounds, workers come from at least sixty-six different countries, according to INTERPOL statistics, and face working conditions that can be characterized as modern slavery – long hours of work, physical and sexual violence, food and sleep deprivation, and threats of violence towards their relatives if the quota is not met or a ransom is not paid. However, escape from a compound does not help; traditionally, people who have been victims of trafficking were seen as offenders and were often arrested by the countries of destination and transit.



## PARTIES INVOLVED

**Myanmar:** In Myanmar's border areas, especially in locations in Karen State like KK Park and Shwe Kokko, exist some of the largest scam complexes that are protected by armed ethnic groups and the border guard forces loyal to them. The response to international pressure has seen a series of raids and demolitions carried out by Myanmar's military government in late 2025; however, the lack of effective central control over the border areas is limiting their ability to enforce.

**Cambodia:** Cambodian scam complexes are numerous and include those affiliated with politically connected conglomerates. International pressure and sanctions have been directed at Cambodia and have targeted networked organizations like the Prince Holding Group, but complaints have continued about the level of domestic enforcement.

**Thailand:** Thailand is the main transit country between the compounds in Myanmar and other nations and has cut power, fuel, and internet supplies at known scam complex centers. Also, it has successfully returned thousands of trafficking victims and detained foreign workers from the compound centers. It sits in a pivotal role in terms of the security of its borders and relationships with the government and armed ethnic groups in Myanmar.

**China:** China has acted as a source of victims for trafficking and scam complexes and as a recipient of scam fraud enforcement pressures due to Chinese criminal networks and nationals involved in such activities. China has called on Myanmar and Cambodia to act in particular in relation to some compounds and has pressured border militias.

**Laos:** Scam and trafficking activities operate from special economic zones in Laos, such as Golden Triangle, with cases of labor and human trafficking similar to those in Myanmar and Cambodia.

**United States:** In the United States, sanctions have been imposed using the Office of Foreign Assets Control of the Treasury Department on scams, financial enablers, and armed groups profiting off the compounds, alongside criminal indictments against the syndicate bosses. These measures have been based on findings of losses worth billions of dollars suffered by victims in the country and

the use of forced labor to cause these losses.

**United Kingdom:** In the United Kingdom, there have been coordinated sanctions alongside the United States against the transnational networks, including the Prince Group, whose aim is to disrupt the financial network involved in transferring scam money through international banking and cryptocurrencies.

**ASEAN:** There have been calls for increased cooperation between members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in relation to cross-border trafficking and cybercrime due to the fact that the compounds function across the borders of several members and rely on regional networks for recruiting and financing purposes.

## **Previous Efforts**

### **1. Human Rights Investigations and Reports of the United Nations**

There have been numerous trauma-informed studies of scams carried out by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and UN Special Rapporteurs leading to a study entitled, “A Wicked Problem: Seeking Human Rights-Based Solutions to Trafficking into Cyber Scam Operations in South-East Asia.” Released in February 2026, the report talks about the issues of torture, sexual violence, and slave labour that affects more than 300,000 people with an emphasis on treating the victims as victims rather than as criminals. Though evidence is quite clear and repetitive, enforcement of those findings by the regional authorities has been slow.

### **2. Law Enforcement Raids and Building Demolition**

There were large-scale operations carried out by the Myanmar military in October and November 2025 that included raids on the compounds, namely, KK Park and Shwe Kokko area which led to detention of thousands of foreigners and the destruction of hundreds of buildings. The Thai government has assisted in this regard by blocking cross-border energy supplies, internet connections and even fuel supplies to the scams. It seems that though displaced

persons are moved to other locations from the raided scams, yet the problem remains unresolved through this method alone.

### **3. Financial Sanctions and Prosecution**

There have been several sanctions by the United States with assistance from the United Kingdom against several individuals and organizations linked to the Prince Holding Group and also to the armed groups that guard scam compounds in the Karen State of Myanmar. There have been indictments of syndicate leaders and the confiscation of cryptocurrency worth several billion dollars. These sanctions were meant to cut off all the financial infrastructure that laundered the scam funds and helped with their reinvestment in scams.