MUN

MODEL UNITED NATIONS

20/20

DIRECTORS WELCOME LETTER:

Dear Delegates and Faculty Advisors,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the American University of Sharjah Model United Nations (AUSMUN) 2020. This conference has been the home of fruitful debate, practical resolutions, dedicated moderators, spectacular delegates, and diligent advisory and executive boards for the past twelve years and is continuing to do so for its thirteenth year. With 1000 delegates registered from more than 45 national and international educational institutions, this conference will be the biggest one yet!

This year's theme 'Embracing Diversity, Shaping the Future' has been designed to capture the essence of issues that surround our globalized society. Even though we have come this forward in time, there has been little to no improvement in accepting diversity as portrayed by the latest atrocities in several countries around the world. However, the future can be successfully be shaped for us, the youth, only by embracing diversity in every sector of life and we hope to draw attention to this.

This background guide has been formulated by our hard-working chairs and the research team to provide delegates with the starting point of their preparation for this three-day conference. The guide is initially divided into two sections based on the two topics and is further split into logical components. Firstly, the Summary and History section acts as an introduction to the issue by highlighting important events, terms, history, and global implications. Secondly, the Discourse on the Issue section establishes a link between the issue, its implications, significance, and the United Nations Charter. Lastly, the Past International Organization (IO) Actions and Latest Developments section elaborates on the previous action that has been taken and latest development in terms of the last actions taken with regards to the issue. At the end of each issue, delegates will find sections of Questions the Discussions and Resolutions Should Address and Suggestions for Further Research that aim to streamline the process of delegate's research. However, in order to grab a better understanding of the topic and be able to position yourself better to participate during the conference, it is advised to go beyond the background guide since this guide does not encapsulate enough information to be sufficient for every country and is only a brief introduction to the issues at hand. It is highly encouraged for delegates to view the 'Delegate Handbook' on the AUSMUN website and the 'How to Research' video on YouTube created by AUSMUN.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to all the contributors to this background guide. It is the collaborative work of the Moderators, AUSMUN Research Team, and the AUSMUN Media Team. On behalf of them all, I truly hope that this guide will be of great help to you.

All the very best for the conference and if you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at research@ausmun.com.

Sincerely,
Manaswi Madichetty
Director of Research
AUSMUN 2020

MODERATORS WELCOME LETTER:

Mohammed Aamir

Sultan Bin Al Shaikh

Mohammad Al Zarooni

Nouf Ismail

Dear Delegates,

It is with great honor that we welcome you to the American University of Sharjah Model United Nations (AUSMUN), and to the General Assembly 3 (GA3): Social, Humanitarian and Cultural committee. As the chairs of GA3, we are delighted to meet all of you and expect nothing less than motivated delegates that will cooperate, hand in hand, to find solutions for the problems we are facing in our society.

The GA3 committee is of vital importance to the UN. The Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee considers a variety of issues ranging from social and humanitarian affairs, to human rights issues for people around the world. Over the years, the GA3 Committee has discussed a host of topics including, the advancement of women, the protection of children, the treatment of refugees, the promotion of fundamental freedoms, the elimination of racism and racial discrimination, the right to self- determination, and indigenous issues. The Committee also addresses important social development questions, such as issues related to youth, family, aging, disability, crime prevention, criminal justice, and international drug control. This year, we will discuss two topics of increasing significance in our ever-developing world;

1. The question of the intentional destruction and misappropriation of cultural heritage
2. The impact of the UN peacekeeping missions on conflicted areas

This conference, as with any other model united nations conference, calls for a lot of pre-conference effort including research on the committee topics, construction of position papers, and active preparation for the first committee session. Therefore, it is with high confidence that we say, if the work is put in before the conference, it will be a delightful and productive time for everyone involved.

Should you have any concerns or inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact us on the following email: GA3.aus@gmail.com

Sincerely,
The GA3 Chairs

GA3

General Assembly 3

The Question of the Intentional Destruction and Misappropriation of Cultural Heritage

1. Summary & History

The 'World Heritage Sites' as identified by UNESCO, are cultural or natural sites of extraordinary worth in terms of cultural significance, research value, biodiversity of structure, and beauty. Cultural heritage quite often is a fundamental part of non-secular, religious, and ethnic groups identities amidst a rapidly internationalizing environment. For several years, a variety of experts have been interested in the feasibility of the current law concerning the defense of cultural properties throughout the conflict. Over the last half of the century, there have been many losses in opulent and historic heritage sites, most particularly in the middle-eastern regions during war. For instance, these losses have been observed in Cyprus throughout the period of their invasion by Turkey, as well as throughout the Iraq-Iran war in the southern region (UNESCO WHC, 2019).

Historically speaking, the subject of care for cultural property has been a crucial issue in both external and internal conflicts. For example, many cultural symbols are lost in battle from the occupied and defeated states. In fact, the defacing of such monuments is commonplace to serve as a symbol of winning for the occupying power. Demolition of culturally significant monuments have long been employed as a strategy for subjugation by invaders to gain influence and control over the local people. This destruction has also been seen during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Central Europe, where housing structures and precious objects were devastated in several respects (Modi, 2015). Although, it is important to note that over the natural course of time, degradation and decay of heritage sites is inevitable. However, the sheer magnitude of destruction observed in recent years has only been due to human factors responsible for the killing and vandalizing of such sites. In our progressive world, urbanization has become the focus of many cities. This development brings forth many developers and businessmen who most often do not consider the protection of cultural and natural resources. Not to mention, despite the economic transition and progression of global cooperation, many minor conflicts take place frequently. In regions with instability, the damage inflicted to World Heritage sites is done with very little consideration. For example, in intrastate conflicts, completely different cultural groups often target each other's cultural sites to establish political dominance that contribute to the endless loop of retaliation and devastation.

Urgent action is needed to avoid putting the world's heritage sites at risk and to discourage disruption to the already protected areas. All World Heritage websites are officially identified by the international community for the standards they provide for quality restoration and security, and it is up to the member states to ensure that this is achieved.

2. Discourse on the Issue

The destruction of cultural heritage continues to attract international attention, especially with recent violent events in Iraq and Syria. Terrorist groups such as ISIS have continued to destroy cultural sites and artifacts with impunity. Their actions amount to erasing history on the face of the Earth. The destruction has exposed gaps in international law and international communities in de-

terring such actions. The United Nations, UNESCO, and other non-governmental cultural organizations have condemned the destruction of heritage sites and called for stern action to address the issue.

Intentional destruction and misappropriation of cultural heritage violate the UN Charter. As articulated in Article 39 of the UN Charter, "unlawful destruction of cultural heritage and the looting and smuggling of cultural property in the event of armed conflict" is prohibited (UNESCO, 2019). The destruction of cultural heritage also has a negative implication on world affairs. It raises concerns about the safety of cultural sites and property. In essence, cultural genocide risks alteration or elimination of historical evidence. Thus, the issue compels the international community to come up with more effective strategies of countering the actions of terrorist groups and prevent the destruction of cultural heritage. Several countries are most severely affected by the issue of cultural heritage destruction including, Syria, Iraq, and Mali. A major contributor to this devastation is the terrorist group ISIS that embarked on a cultural genocide by destroying holy temples, UNESCO cultural sites, other historic places, artifacts, and buildings (UNESCO WHC, 2019). The bombing of the Temple of Bel, an iconic monument in Syria reveals the extent of the problem.

3. Past International Organization (IO) Actions & Latest Developments

Several organizations such as UNESCO, Interpol, and the European Union have been working to protect and safeguard cultural heritage. The UN has previously addressed the issue by enacting several resolutions. As Jakubowski (2018) mentions, Resolution 1483 of 2003 confirmed the obligation of the international community to counter crimes against cultural sites in armed conflicts. It required member-states to take the right step to ensure a safe return of Iraqi cultural property to Iraqi institutions. The resolution ensured that cultural property that had been transferred by illicit means was returned. In addition, the UNSC Resolution 2199 of 2015 mandated all states to cooperate with UNESCO and Interpol to counter trade of unlawfully removed religious, scientific, and cultural objects from Syria and Iraq to cut terrorist financing. The limitation of these resolutions is that they lacked a coherent global approach to addressing the issue. The UN is currently taking stern action to protect cultural heritage. In addition, Resolution 2347 calls on the Member States to introduce inventories of cultural property that have been unlawfully removed from their original location. It also introduces an international fund to protect endangered cultural heritage sites. The UN continues to work with Interpol to intercept unlawfully removed cultural property being sold in the black market. It also works with other international organizations by mandating them to track and dismantle the networks being used by terrorist organizations to trade in cultural heritage.

The GA3 committee is permitted to report and identify unlawfully removed cultural artifacts to the relevant authorities. It works with intelligence agencies to identify the traffickers of cultural property and their networks. It follows the activities of terrorist organizations to identify their financiers and attempts to find ways of cutting those links and trade ties.

4. Questions the Discussions and Resolutions Should Address

- Who are the key perpetrators of the destruction of cultural heritage?
- Should the strategy on countering the destruction of cultural heritage be changed?
- How can the international community cooperate to address the issue?
- Can public awareness about cultural heritage help?

5. Suggestions for Further Research

- Ways to protect world historical sites from vandalism and others destruction

- Ways that governments can work with GA3 and UNESCO to protect their historical sites
- Ways to prevent the misappropriation of cultural heritage sites

The Impact of the UN Peacekeeping Missions on Conflicted Areas

1. Summary & History

UN peacekeeping missions assist conflict-torn countries in creating conditions of lasting peace. During the cold war, there were several missions involved in observing, monitoring, and maintaining ceasefires and providing support in peacemaking efforts. Current peacekeeping missions do not just maintain peace and security in conflict-torn countries but also protect civilians by disarming, demobilizing, and reintegrating combatants and aiding the political process. Peacekeeping missions evolved from introduction of impartial non-violent military personnel in conflicted areas, to promotion of peace and encouragement of ceasefires, to then using military force in protecting civilians and stabilizing serious situations.

UN peacekeeping missions first originated in 1948 with deployments in the Middle East. Since then the UN has organized around 70 peacekeeping missions worldwide, 13 of which are still active. The first successful mission concluded in 1956 with the cessation of hostilities in the Suez Crisis. After the Cold War, there was a surge of new peacekeeping missions with 20 initiated between 1989 and 1994. Due to the success of earlier missions, expectations for the consecutive ones were unreasonably high. The Security Council failed to provide sufficient authorization and funds to make those new missions successful, and peacemakers failed to meet the established expectations. In 2000, the then Secretary-General commissioned a report on UN peacekeeping operations called "Brahimi report." Based on the report's findings, UN peacemakers implemented changes in their operations. Further, through the first decade of the 21st century, the need for peacekeeping grew and with it the need to implement more changes. By May of 2010, the situation stabilized as UN peacekeepers reduced and retrieved its troops from key locations. In 2018, the Trump administration cut its contribution to the UN peacemaking efforts by 3%, which left the organization financially strapped for its ongoing endeavors.

2. Discourse on the Issue

The issue pertaining to UN peacekeeping operations is whether or not they are impactful in crisis-affected areas. The new means of peacekeeping, aimed at protecting civilians, can also compromise the UN's impartial position and in turn endanger the UN peacemakers' personnel and the people its aiming to protect. The involvement of military force can also endanger the principles of peacemaking, which in turn can lead to the withdrawal of support (Hunt, 2016).

Researchers say that UN peacemaking efforts, though flawed, have an apparent conflict-reducing effect. Peacekeeping missions reduce violence, prevent major armed conflicts, reduce major conflicts, or ultimately end conflicts. According to research, conflicting parties are 20 percent more likely to realize the terms of a peace agreement and 50% less likely to restart the conflict with UN peacekeepers on site (Dayal, 2017). However, it is difficult to evaluate the qualitative impact peacekeeping efforts have around the world. Peacekeeping operations provide significant aid in sustaining peace in conflicted areas at a low cost. The measures taken by the UN help to resolve conflicts before they span across borders and minimize the warring parties'

violence towards civilians. However, newer peacekeeping missions involving active military involvement have proven to be less effective and rarely reach their mandated goals.

3. Past IO Actions and The Latest Developments

The UN's new peacebuilding agenda, spearheaded by the newly appointed Secretary General Antonio Guterres, has put its focus squarely on managing the outbreak, escalation, continuation, and recurrence of conflict. It is popular opinion that these Peace Keeping Operations (PKOs) are an efficient tool for managing pathways of conflict. Evidenced by the different types of missions and financial support, PKOs have a clear conflict-reducing effect as they impact future incidence of conflict. However, the effect of PKOs is heavily restricted to their sole purpose of prevention. Nonetheless, there is a discernible effect since the reduction of conflict intensity also tends to increase the chances of peace in following years. Upon analysis of UN statistics, it can be observed that there are some interesting regional differences in the effects of PKOs. PKOs have the strongest effect in three regions that have been particularly afflicted by conflict: West Asia and North Africa; East, Central, and Southern Africa; and South and Central Asia.

In current times, organized crime has become a central scourge, plaguing nations around the globe. This problem particularly affects fragile or unstable states that continue to propose a concentrated military response to the challenge. The response is also proposed alongside better strategies for combatting conflict and insecurity which include, building up police forces, strengthening the justice sector, and reforming the prison system.

Some representatives have hypothesized that the failures of some United Nations missions can be traced back to the fact that civilian populations had to remain under threat for months while the Secretary-General continued his relentless pursuit of contributors. The Organizations' current peacekeeping operations require reform. Peacekeeping requires adequate logistics, clear directives and skilled personnel. However, more importantly, peacekeeping also requires well-equipped troops with the skills to protect civilians and humanitarian personnel as well as themselves.

4. Questions The Discussions and The Resolutions Should Address

- What is the scope for improvement of the UN Peace Keeping Operations?
- How can we, as a committee, ensure the success of these operations?
- Which member nations can provide the required troops?

5. Suggestions For Further Research

- PKOs in your state – their limitations and strengths
- Human rights violations in peacekeeping mission regions

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