



# MODEL UNITED NATIONS

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# **DIRECTORS WELCOME LETTER:**



**Manaswi Madichetty**

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 far 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 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 gain 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](mailto:research@ausmun.com).

Sincerely,  
Manaswi Madichetty  
Director of Research  
AUSMUN 2020

# **MODERATORS WELCOME LETTER:**



**Aisha Almaazmi**

**Haya AlSuwaidi**



**Noor Nidal**

**Borna Farshad Motlagh**

Dear Delegates,

It is an honor to welcome you to the 2020 American University of Sharjah Model United Nations, and specifically to the committees of the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crimes (UNODC). AUSMUN follows the aim of Model United Nations in bringing students together to discuss current world issues by displaying the diplomacy and widening their knowledge.

the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crimes addresses issues within the United Nations that correspond to issues of the Drug Market, Criminal Justice, international terrorism and Fraud, as well as the protection of International property from illicit trafficking. One of the main goals this committee strives for is creating awareness regarding the issues at hand, and emphasizing on the significance of global acknowledgement of the problems at hand being 'Web-based arms trafficking- investigating the illegal trade of firearms through the hidden web' and 'Cultural Property Theft'.

The conference is catered to nourish student skills of debate and research; therefore, we hope to have fruitful debates and interesting conversation throughout the sessions. It is a chance for the participants to interact in thought-provoking topics, enhancing their public speaking skills and critical thinking.

We wish you all good luck with your research and preparation, and we look forward to meeting you all at the conference.

Sincerely,  
The UNODC Chairs



**UNODC**

**United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime**

# Topic I

## Web-based arms trafficking- investigating the illegal trade of firearms through the hidden web

### 1. Summary & History

Policing the internet has been one of the biggest struggles of the emerging technologies of our age. Having said that, the cases of organized crime and attacks that have been enabled by the hidden web have been too many to count. A study on the criminal cyber services market (Positive Technologies, 2018) found that Q1 of 2018 had a 32 percent increase in crime detection when compared to Q1 of 2017. The hidden or dark web, as defined by Aldridge and Décary-Héту (2014) and Martin (2014), refers to the part of the internet that is not indexed by search engines. This committee aims to investigate the illegal trade of firearms through the hidden web, which has emerged with the first crypto market – the Silk Road.

The Silk Road was launched in 2011 by the computer programmer Ross William Ulbricht under the pseudonyms Dread Pirate Roberts, Frosty, and Altoid before it was shut down in 2013 by the FBI (Paoli, Aldridge, Ryan, & Warnes, 2017). The site had an extension called “The Armory” that enabled vendors to list guns, ammunition, and explosives. Along the same lines as the Silk Road is Adamflowers, later known as The Farmer’s Market, Sheep Marketplace, RAMP, and Black Market Reloaded, to name a few. One of the biggest issues with crypto markets is as the name hints, the payment method is cryptocurrency. Cryptocurrency, is a medium of exchange that uses strong cryptography to secure financial transactions – which makes them extremely difficult to trace. The focus on the link between the dark web terrorism and organized crime rose following the 2016 Munich Shootings, where the weapons used by the “lone-wolf terrorist” were connected to vendors on the hidden web. Another attack that has been linked to the hidden web is the Paris shootings in 2015, although they have not been confirmed. Such acts cemented a widespread public concern that the dark web is an enabler and facilitator for terrorists and organized criminals seeking firearms and yet, very little is known about the size and scope of the weapons trade on the dark web. A study by Paoli, Aldridge, Ryan, and Warnes (2017) found that a combined total of 91% of the listing on the hidden web were firearms, arms-related digital products and ammunition – with pistol guns being the most commonly listed firearm.

### 2. Discourse on the Issue

The dark web allows illegal trade at a global scale where buyers and vendors can be located across the world and are able to connect and conduct business in a few simple clicks (Paoli, 2018). That is, the dark web eliminates location barriers between consumers and merchants. This is one of the most prominent implications of the dark webs trafficking – both parties are instantly exposed to a global market, protected under anonymous profiles, using virtually untraceable transactions on crypto markets. This information is also available to everyone with an internet connection given the abundance of tutorials online. Therefore, even users with very little internet literacy and technical skill will be able to engage in transactions given a basic understanding of the process. The main intervention strategies used such as traditional investigation techniques, postal detection and interception, online detection and disruption all have barriers due to the nature of the secure crypto markets on the dark web as well as the sheer volume of orders be-

ing placed. Also, some vendors list allows 'worldwide' as a shipping destination which naturally makes tracing packages more difficult – which also happens to be the most popular 'destination'. This in turn makes current techniques very cost and time intensive with very little results.

Despite the actual scale of dark web enabled firearms trade being relatively small compared to other markets such as drugs, there is a general agreement that its potential impact on security is significant (RAND, 2017). Having said that, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) estimated that the total value for global arms trade in 2017 was at least \$95 billion (SIPRI, 2017). The United States has been recorded to have the highest rate of illicit arms flow with an approximated 319,593 arms seized in 2017 (UNODC).

In a nutshell, the main objective of the UN is to control the supply of firearms. Taking into consideration the effects this trade has on the stability and development of nations, the UN listed this issue under the 16th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) – peace, justice, and strong institutions. Under this, the UN aims to significantly reduce arms flow by 2030 by recording and standardizing data on seized, found, and surrendered arms (UNODC, n.d.). In order for this to be done, training is needed to strengthen and standardize data collection as well as allow opportunities for sharing and relaying of information related to illegal trafficking of firearms (UNODC, 2018).

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

The issue regarding web-based arms trafficking has been in the spotlight after Europe's many terrorist attacks. Most organizations have focused on the depth of the issue; however, many failed to acknowledge the relationship between arms trafficking and the dark web. In order to investigate the nature of the relationship, many government-funded research organizations such as the RAND Corporation and the UK Economic and Social Research Council have initiated studies exploring the dark web and firearms. The main objective of RAND's study in 2018 was to estimate the scope of trade of firearms on the dark web, along with identifying the types that are dealt and sold on the web.

Furthermore, the issue has been directly addressed by the United Nations, who have held past conferences in 1997 and 1999 to address the issues of trading firearms. However, the UN shone light on the role played by the dark web, which initiates transactions of such firearms. In 2018, The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) published an Occasional Paper titled *The Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons on the Dark Web* which addressed the role of the dark web in facilitating the buying and selling of firearms. The UN called for financial and technical assistance to combat this issue and eradicate the illegal trade of firearms. The resolution also called upon international governments to establish stricter rules on firearms sellers and buyers, as well as exercising control over manufacturers. UNODA, along with UNODC also stress upon classifying illicit firearms dealing as a criminal offence with heavy fines associated.

Most of the international organizations involved stressed the importance of international cooperation, since it is an issue that could potentially affect everyone with network access. The UN, along with its associated organizations, ask for manufacturers of firearms to be licensed and government-approved.

### **4. Questions the Discussions and Resolutions Should Address**

- How does the dark web encourage terrorism and terrorist attacks?
- How can technology-rich and developed nations help prevent illicit firearms dealing on the dark web, other than financial aid?



- How can governments and international organisations tighten regulations and prevent easy access to the dark web?
- What are some ways that the dark web could be monitored, and officials alerted for any impending terrorist attacks?
- To what degree should governments and international organisations be involved in monitoring the dark web?

## **5. *Suggestions for Further Research***

- Regulating the dark web
- Terrorist cyber attacks
- Gangs and cults on the dark web
- Types of weaponry/firearms on dark web.
- Firearms manufacturers and dealers licensing requirements.

# Topic II

## Cultural Property Theft

### 1. Summary & History

Cultural Property is defined as “an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions and values.” (Culture in Development) Cultural property is unique and exclusive to the evolution and distinctiveness of different sets of people from different parts of the world. However, today more than ever, there is a constant threat of cultural property theft, our second topic for the committee.

The global trade of historical objects, antiques, and relics, both lawful and unlawful, was commonly managed by experts employed within an established network and adhering to centralized methods. Prized objects were classified, analyzed, and finally chosen, tailor-made transportation organized, and border crossings occasionally simplified by the use of counterfeit papers, concealed compartments, or payments of hush-money to crooked officials. An organization of classified accomplices formed a paper trail of papers that generated contracts, payments and tax charges while concealing the dealers from detection. Such proceedings have become more effortless and more uncomplicated nowadays due to globalized trade, innovative methods of shipment, and the guarded locations and wealth of associates presented by the Internet (“Protecting Cultural Heritage”, 2016).

People have been demolishing treasured cultural artifacts for eras, as far back as 700 BCE, when the Assyrians ransacked and wrecked Babylon, with its many prized objects. One of the most troublesome issues that U.N. committees like SOCHUM (Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural Committee) or the UNODC have needed to address is the conservation of cultural property in zones of conflict, like wars. During the past half a century, many sites have met their match as a result of international, or even civil wars. Some good examples of this would be sites in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War between (1955 to 1975), or ones in Cyprus during the Turkish invasion in 1974.

Another threat endangering the longevity and resulting in the loss, obliteration, relocation, or larceny of historical, cultural property sites are international organized criminal groups illicitly trafficking the property through the internet or underground markets and making substantial profits as a result. “A substantial amount of looting happens around the world, and yet so far the efforts to combat trafficking in cultural property have not been in proportion to the gravity and extent of this criminal manifestation” (UNODC). Trafficking has also developed into a significant method of money laundering and a source of funding for terrorist organizations; much of their profit goes into strengthening their recruitment efforts and increasing the capacity of operations. Sometimes, trafficking crimes can include many national jurisdictions; because an item is taken from one country, travels through air, sea, and land through multiple states, before finally reaching its final destination.

## **2. Discourse on the Issue**

The reason why this is an important issue is that a country's cultural property is what defies its history, traditions, and essentially, culture. Historical objects can be used to learn a lot about the history of a nation and the people that came before. Upon the destruction or loss of these objects, such invaluable knowledge is gone.

The theft or destruction of cultural property directly violates the UN Charter. The UN Security Council, in accordance with Article 39 of the UN Charter, resolved that the 'unlawful destruction of cultural heritage and the looting and smuggling of cultural property in the event of armed conflicts' constitute a threat to international peace and security and unanimously adopted Resolution 2347 on 24 March 2017. The resolution "condemns the unlawful destruction of cultural heritage, including the destruction of religious sites and artefacts, and the looting and smuggling of cultural property from archaeological sites, museums, libraries, archives, and other sites, notably by terrorist groups" (S/RES/2347, 2017).

While many countries are victims of cultural property theft and/or destruction, some nations stand out as they have been hit the most. Two of those countries, Iraq and Syria, are victims of constant attacks by the terrorist organization ISIS. While both countries are engaged in anti-ISIS measures, they do not have sufficient man-power to withstand the annihilation of their prized artifacts. As a matter of fact, Middle Eastern countries, such as Syria, are the ones suffering the most. The Ancient City of Bosra, Khalid ibn an-Walid Mosque, and Krak des Chevaliers, all in Syria, have all been destroyed due to the conflicts taking place in the nation. Other sites, such as Cyrene in Libya and Jonah's Tomb in Iraq, were ruined due to the Libyan Civil War and ISIS attacks, respectively.

## **3. Past IO Actions and The Latest Developments**

Along with UNODC, the most prominent international organizations that have been involved in finding solutions regarding this issue are UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), The International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Main topics of discussion have been the protection and consequences of cultural property theft in conflict zones. Some of which being Iraq and Syria wherein not only are cultural objects are being destroyed but heritage is slowly annihilated with the persecution of individuals and communities. The presence of fake art and artefacts filling the market seems to disrupt the authenticity and value in which the heritage is presented originally.

Though calls for safety regulations are continuously present, effective action and campaigns have slowly been initiated. In 2017, UNODC Executive Director Yury Fedotov announced working with UNESCO, INTERPOL, and The International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) along with other organizations in promoting action hoping to end the looting of cultural property. (UNODC, 2017) Moreover, the existing The World Customs Organization (WCO) Container Control Programme, initially formed to control good traded through sea, has advanced in training Port Control Units to detect illicitly trafficked cultural heritage. Current initiatives include the formation of educational workshops in hopes to provide more exposure about the importance of cultural objects; wherein emphasis is added to the methods in which creating public awareness could lead to powerful impact on signifying the issue (UNODC, 2019).

Many resolutions were proposed regarding the elimination of organized crimes, especially in regard to cultural objects and historical remnants. For example, United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime resolution 8/1 of 21 October 2016, invites states to strengthen the

cooperation of authorities in criminal matters to fight transnational organized crime. However, the implementation is not as widespread as it set out to be. Other resolutions that were introduced were; 69/196 of 18 December 2014, entitled "International Guidelines for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Responses with Respect to Trafficking in Cultural Property and Other Related Offences, as well as 69/281 of 28 May 2015 on saving the cultural heritage of Iraq.

#### ***4. Questions The Discussions and The Resolutions Should Address***

- How can cultural property be protected in conflict zones?
- The role of media coverage in the protection of heritage. Why is this issue not widely spread?
- Why educating the youth and current education campaigns might succeed or fail?
- What issues have not been addressed, leading to failure in the prevention of illicit theft?
- What are the effects of Cultural Property Theft on the growth of countries and communities?

#### ***5. Suggestions For Further Research***

- Previous incidents and means of cultural property theft.
- Purposes and consequences for cultural property theft.
- Why certain communities are targeted and how to regulate safety.

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