

*Preserving and Reconstructing Cultural Heritage in War-Torn Areas*

## **Committee Guide**

*United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*





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## 1. Personal Introduction

Hello everyone!

My name is Michael Matthias Galuska, short: Michi and I will chair the UNESCO in this year's conference. I am 18 years old and I live in Oldenburg. Currently I am finishing my A-level exams.

I'm interested in talking and discussing about current political topics and I love meeting friends. I do competitive sports: volleyball and climbing. Furthermore, I play the piano and love spending time in the nature.

This year's conference will be my second MUN experience and my first as a chair. Last year I was a delegate in the GA 3<sup>rd</sup>.

I am greatly looking forward to chairing the UNESCO together with my co-chair Caroline. I truly hope that at this year's conference we will make some new experiences together and meet great new people in our committee.

I am really looking forward to meeting you guys – so excited!

Yours sincerely,  
Michi

Yours,  
Cornelia

Hey, everyone! My name is Caroline Cronjäger and I will be chairing the UNESCO committee together with Cornelia.

I am eighteen years old and I am currently studying Mathematics at Ruhr-Universität Bochum. I've been doing Model UN and Model European Parliament since 2016 and I chaired my first committee in 2017 at Model European Parliament in Kerkrade (where I met Cornelia for the first time).

In my free time I mostly enjoy doing different kinds of sports (tennis, fencing, fitness, etc.). I also like to read, and I am quite a nerd for space exploration and astronomy. Furthermore, I play the guitar, sing in a chamber choir and enjoy listening to music.

This is my third OLMUN overall and my first OLMUN as chair, and I am very excited to work together with you and set off to a new beginning.

Yours,  
Caroline



## 2. Committee Introduction

UNESCO's primary goal is to enhance international cooperation in order to protect the world's natural and cultural heritage and make education accessible for every citizen of the world.

UNESCO has been a fundamental organ of the United Nations Organization ever since its creation in 1945 in the aftermath of the Second World War.

It is based on the International Bureau of Education which was first mentioned in a 1921 League of Nations resolution, the organization preceding the United Nations.

During and after World War II, several conferences and councils were set, which largely agreed on the need for an agency solely dedicated to the conservation of education and natural and cultural heritage.

Following the Conference of Allied ministers of Education (CAME) and the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, it was finally decided at the UN Conference on International Organization to schedule a conference for the creation of an educational and cultural organization.

Such was titled the ECO/CONF and took place during November 1945 in London, where delegates from a total of 44 governments were present.

There, the Constitution of UNESCO was introduced and signed by 37 countries. Furthermore, a Preparatory Commission was established which worked until the constitution came into force in November of the following year.

Ever since then, UNESCO dedicated its work to some of the most pressing issues, the United Nations are confronted with. They work to resolve the educational crisis that is affecting millions of children worldwide, preserve natural heritage sites on all seven continents, and protect the cultural heritage of over 5000 years of human history.

Today, a grant total of over 2000 people from all over the world are employed directly at UNESCO's headquarter in Paris. And an additional 600 staff members work in over 50 field offices which are distributed all around the globe.

UNESCO has also made a point of strengthening their cooperation with many Non-Governmental Organizations, 300 of which have official relations to the agency.

## 3. Important Definitions

In order to facilitate your debates, we would like to provide you with the definitions of the most important terms surrounding our topic as they are given by the UNESCO.

### 3.1 Culture

Culture is defined as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or social group which equally encompasses art, literature, lifestyles, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

### 3.2 Cultural Heritage

Cultural Heritage is a wide term which titles the entirety of cultural legacy which has been created since the dawn of humanity. Not only does it include artifacts such as books, tools, religious devices and artwork. It also includes buildings, statues and cult sites such as the Machu Picchu or the Giza Pyramid Complex.


Cultural heritage is of immeasurable value to society as it tells the history of humanity's cultural evolution and depicts the diversity of human creation. Through the examination of such artifacts, historians are able to reconstruct ancient history and learn how societies changed throughout the millennia.

UNESCO has dedicated most of its work to the preservation of such heritage. Sites must be examined, repaired, restored and protected from vandalism. Artifacts need to be catalogued and stored in safe places such as museums; theft and forgery of such items must be prevented.

### 3.3 Movable Cultural Heritage

“Property which, on religious or secular grounds, is specifically designated by each state as being of importance for archaeology, prehistory, history, literature, art or science” and which belongs to the following categories:

- property relating to history, including the history of science and technology and military and social history, to the life of national leaders, thinkers, scientists and artists and to events of national importance;
- rare collections and specimens of fauna, flora, minerals and anatomy, and objects of paleontological interest;
- products of archaeological excavations (including regular and clandestine) or of archaeological discoveries;
- elements of artistic or historical monuments or archaeological sites which have been dismembered;
- antiquities more than one hundred years old, such as inscriptions, coins and engraved seals; objects of ethnological interest;
- property of artistic interest, such as: pictures, paintings and drawings produced entirely by hand on any support and in any material (excluding industrial designs and manufactured articles decorated by hand);
- original works of statuary art and sculpture in any material; original engravings, prints and lithographs;
- original artistic assemblages and montages in any material;
- rare manuscripts and incunabula, old books, documents and publications of
- special interest (historical, artistic, scientific, literary, etc.) singly or in

- 
- collections; postage, revenue and similar stamps, singly or in collections;
  - archives, including sound, photographic and cinematographic archives;
  - articles of furniture more than one hundred years old and old musical instruments

### **3.3 Immovable Cultural Heritage**

Immovable Cultural Heritage are monuments, such as architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science.

It also includes groups of buildings, such as groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science; and sites, such as works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.

### **3.4 Illicit Traffic**

The import, export or transfer of ownership of property contrary to the provisions of the domestic legal norms of the jurisdiction in which the import, export, or transfer occurred and/or any applicable international legal norms.

### **3.5 Looting**

The act of stealing goods (artifacts) from a place, mainly in periods of war or riot.

### **3.6 International Armed Conflict**

All cases of declared war or of any armed conflict that may arise between two or more high contracting parties, even if the state of war is not recognized, the convention shall also apply to all cases of partial or total occupation of the territory of a high contracting party even if the said occupation meets with no armed resistance.

## **4. Defining the Issue and Specific Examples**

The destruction and damage of culture heritage is a phenomenon which has existed for centuries. This destruction however takes place in various contexts. During periods of war, damage of cultural heritage may be a casualty of war.

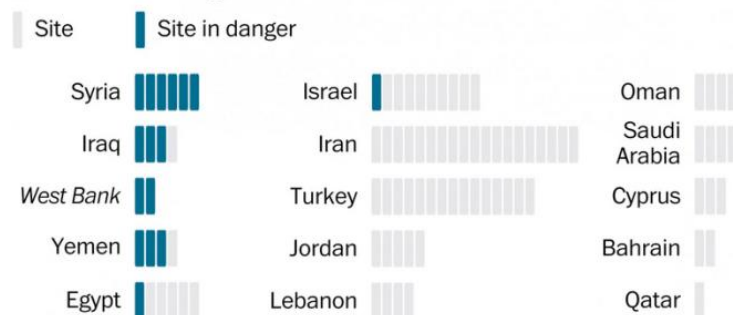
Both movable and immovable artefacts that are exposed in war zones, are affected by military action taking place. At the moment, there are 46 World Heritage Sites (WHS) listed on the “World Heritage Sites in danger” list due to such a situation.

In addition, destruction can also be used as a deliberate tool to weaken the enemy physically and foremost symbolically by destroying objects of a high cultural value to a nation. Thus, it is used as an ideological tool and sometimes not only to weaken the enemy but also to demonstrate power over a culture which opposes the norms imposed by the own culture of the perpetrators. However, it can equally be a profit-based undertaking.

It is important to consider that these strategies can be used by state authorities such as national armies but nowadays it is mainly non state actors like terrorist groups or other criminal associations who will engage in this kind of behavior.

State-driven action was widespread during the Second World War in which a great amount of cultural property such as the Royal Castle in Warsaw, or the St. Michael’s Church in Coventry were destroyed, damaged or looted. Today, the issue is as frequent as ever and mainly touches war torn zones on the African continent and in the in Middle East.

### World Heritage sites in the Middle East



Note: United Arab Emirates has no World Heritage sites  
Source: UNESCO

THE WASHINGTON POST

For instance, the terrorist organization ISIS which proclaimed itself to be a caliphate under Sharia Law operating on the sovereign territories of Syria and Iraq has significantly contributed to the destruction of historically important and valuable sights such as the ruins of the ancient city of Palmyra. By destroying historical artifacts being at least a few thousand years old, ISIS wants to portray itself as a strong actor who is able to introduce a completely new era.

BEFORE:



AFTER:



Syria which has six UNESCO culture heritage sites has seen all of them undergoing some type of damage due to the violence of ISIS. Besides Palmyra, also the historical city of Aleppo has been significantly destroyed. Syria is also a case in which ISIS has used parts of the destroyed monuments for illicit trade to fund their organization, despite the UN's ban on the trade of artifacts that were looted from Syria since 2011.

In Iraq, the Islamic State has destroyed numerous churches, mosques and other cultural heritage sites, mostly in Mosul between June 2014 and February



2015. The extremist group has looted several artifacts from the temples and sold them on the black market in order to raise money for their operations.

In addition, the destruction of numerous ancient artifacts in the Mosul Museum on the 26th of February 2015 is well known due to the diffusion of its footage on the Internet. ISIS claimed that the artifacts promoted “idolatry”. This event led to the UNESCO’s Director-General to call for a meeting of the Security Council regarding the destruction of cultural property in Iraq.

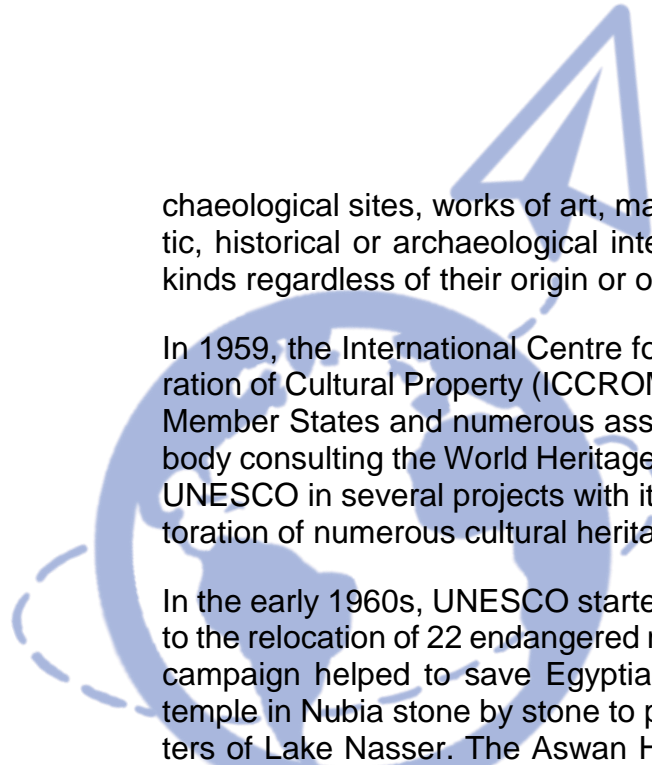


Libya and Yemen are also countries with ongoing wars, in which the cultural heritage of the countries is threatened due to these conflicts. Libya is also targeted by the so-called Islamic State destroying its artifacts but to a lesser extent. The International Council of Museums noted that cultural heritage from the ancient city of Tripoli was being looted in particular to be sold illegally all over the world. It therefore requested assistance from Interpol and the UN in putting an end to the situation.

## 5. UNESCO and its Measures for Protection

When UNESCO was founded in 1946, mainly educational issues were at the heart of the action of the organization and it took several years for them to also concentrate on cultural issues.

In 1954, the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed conflict was adopted in The Hague as a direct response to the massive destruction of cultural heritage as a result of WWII. It is the first international treaty with a world-wide vocation focusing exclusively on the protection of cultural heritage in the event of an armed conflict. It covers immovable and movable cultural heritage, including monuments of architecture, art or history, ar-



archaeological sites, works of art, manuscripts, books and other objects of artistic, historical or archaeological interest, as well as scientific collections of all kinds regardless of their origin or ownership.

In 1959, the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) was established by UNESCO. It has 110 Member States and numerous associate members, as it is the second expert body consulting the World Heritage Committee. ICCROM has cooperated with UNESCO in several projects with its main aim being the preservation and restoration of numerous cultural heritage sites.

In the early 1960s, UNESCO started the first international campaign which led to the relocation of 22 endangered monuments. The international safeguarding campaign helped to save Egyptian temples by dismantling the Abu Simbel temple in Nubia stone by stone to prevent them from being flooded by the waters of Lake Nasser. The Aswan High Dam which was built for this occasion drew unprecedented international attention to the protection of cultural heritage. The ongoing discussion between culture and development which was at the center of the debate at the time was resolved by showing that the combination of both is very much possible.

In 1965, The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) was established as a sub-organization of UNESCO. Its main purpose is the protection and maintenance of monuments and historical heritage. ICOMOS is one of the three expert bodies of the World Heritage Committee and approximately 95 states collaborate with it.

In 1970, the UNESCO adopted the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property which requires its State Parties to take action in the following main fields:

Preventive measures including inventories, export certificates, monitoring trade, imposition of penal or administrative sanctions, educational campaigns, etc.

Restitution provisions: in accordance with Article 7 (b) (ii) of the Convention, State Parties undertake, at the request of the State Party “of origin”, appropriate steps to recover and return cultural property imported (after the entry into force of this Convention in both concerned nations)

International framework: idea of strengthening the cooperation between the State Parties for instance by providing the possibility for agreements on import and export controls

In 1972, the UNESCO adopted the World Heritage Convention which for the first time links the concepts of protecting nature and cultural properties in the same document. It recognizes the way in which people interact with both and

aims at achieving a balance. In addition, the Convention also sets out a definition with criteria upon which it can be decided which kind of natural or cultural sites can qualify for the World Heritage List.

The Convention sets out the duties of State Parties in identifying potential sites and their role in protecting and preserving them. By signing the Convention, each country pledges to conserve not only the World Heritage sites situated in its territory, but also to protect its national heritage. The State Parties are encouraged to integrate the protection of the cultural and natural heritage into regional planning programmes, set up staff and services at their sites, undertake scientific and technical conservation research and adopt measures which give this heritage a function in the day-to-day life of the community.

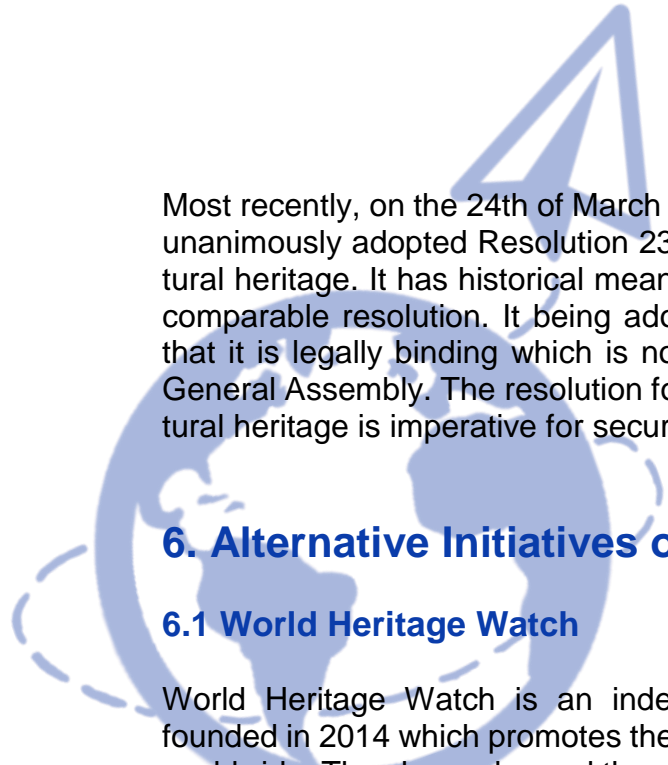
It explains how the World Heritage Fund is to be used and managed and under what conditions international financial assistance may be provided. The Convention stipulates the obligation of State Parties to report regularly to the World Heritage Committee on the state of conservation of their World Heritage properties. These reports are crucial to the work of the Committee as they enable it to assess the conditions of the sites, decide on specific programme needs and resolve recurrent problems. It also encourages State Parties to strengthen the appreciation of the public for World Heritage properties and to enhance their protection through educational and information programmes.

In 1976, the World Heritage Committee was founded. The 41 State Parties are elected by the General Assembly for a four-year period. It is charged with the task of selecting sites which will be considered as UNESCO World Heritage Sites which includes both the World Heritage List but also the List of World Heritage in danger. Furthermore, it monitors the progression of preservation of the World Heritage properties and has the right to allocate the budget of the World Heritage Fund. It is often used to provide assistance for State Parties requesting help.

In 2002, the UNESCO adopted the so-called Budapest Convention. It has five strategic objectives which are called the five C's being the following:

- Credibility
- Conservation
- Capacity-building
- Communication
- Communities

In 2003, the UNESCO Declaration concerning the international destruction of cultural heritage was adopted after recognizing the increasing numbers of acts of destruction against cultural heritage and especially the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas located in Afghanistan in 2001. The declaration focuses on acts of destruction of cultural heritage, movable and immovable. It advances measures to protect cultural heritage in times of armed conflict.



Most recently, on the 24th of March 2017, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2347 which deals with the protection of cultural heritage. It has historical meaning as it took almost a century to adopt a comparable resolution. It being adopted by the UN Security Council means that it is legally binding which is not the case for resolutions passed by the General Assembly. The resolution formally recognizes that the defense of cultural heritage is imperative for security.

## **6. Alternative Initiatives of NGOs**

### **6.1 World Heritage Watch**

World Heritage Watch is an independent non-governmental organization founded in 2014 which promotes the preservation of UNESCO World Heritage worldwide. They have charged themselves with observing that World Heritage is actually protected and maintained in practice, and not sacrificed to political compromises and economic interests

### **6.2 Heritage for Peace**

Heritage for Peace is a group of heritage experts who believe that cultural heritage is a common ground for dialogue and a tool for building peace. Their mission is to support heritage workers, indifferent of citizenship or religion, as they work towards the protection of cultural heritage for future generations.

### **6.3 Herein Network**

The HEREIN System is a tool to collect data and information related to financing mechanisms, legislations, documentation systems, integrated conservation strategies and awareness-raising actions among others. This database is complemented by a unique multilingual HEREIN Thesaurus containing over 500 terms and concepts in the 14 languages presently available. The Herein Network is endorsed by the Council of Europe.

## **7. Questions a Resolution Should Answer**

How can the existing resolutions and Conventions be implemented effectively?

What mechanisms can be created to further protect cultural heritage during and after war?

Is there a need for redefining/updating certain notions and definitions?

How can preventive measures be implemented? (taking into account destruction, illicit trade etc.)

Who and with what mechanisms should the reconstruction of cultural heritage be conducted? (are there differences between heritage belonging to nature and those belonging to culture?)

Are there measures of International Cooperation which could be taken to better the communication and implementation of measures? (Which countries and organizations could be allied?)

## 8. A Few Last Words

This committee guide is merely meant to offer a basic introduction to the topic at hand. It is your own responsibility to conduct extensive research on the topic and find out about your country's position

In preparation for the conference we ask you to write both a **draft resolution** and a **policy statement** which summarizes your delegation's opinion on the topic. You will find information on how such documents are written and structured in the OLMUN handbook which is available for free download in the download sections of OLMUN's official website (olmun.org). We await your papers until **June 1st 2019**.

We are aware that every year, OLMUN is attended by many first-time MUNers. If you have any questions about the upcoming, conference, the committee or any documents, please feel free to contact us or the OLMUN secretariat via email!

Sincerely yours,  
Caroline and Michi

## 9. Bibliography and Links for Further Research

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<http://www.heritageforpeace.org/?lang=fr>

<https://www.coe.int/fr/web/culture-and-heritage/herein-heritage-network>

## 10. Resolutions and Conventions

*Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed conflict*

*the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property*

*Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property*

*World Heritage Convention*

*Budapest Convention*

*Declaration concerning the international destruction of cultural heritage*

*Resolution 2347*