Committee: Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee

Issue: Protection of cultural heritage in times of conflict

Student Officer: Margarita Kourti Menou, Marianna Zambeli

Position: Co-chairs

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

My name is Margarita Kourti Menou and I am currently attending the last year of high school at the 14th General High School of Thessaloniki. ACGMUN will be my 7th MUN conference and my last one as a high school student. I am very excited to be one of the chairs of this committee and I am sure that we will all have a great time during these three days.

My name is Marianna Zambeli and I will be one of your Co-Chairs during the 1st session of ACGMUN in the Social Cultural and Humanitarian Committee. ACGMUN will be the 15thConference at which I am going to be taking part in and my 6th time as a Student Officer. I am currently an IB1 student at CGS. Margarita and I are open to any questions that you may have concerning the topic prior and during the conference. I am looking forward to meeting you all in March.

Kind regards, your Co- Chairs,

Marianna Zambeli & Margarita Kourti Menou

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

The destruction or damage of cultural heritage isn't a recent phenomenon, as such events have been taking place for centuries now. When it comes to war such destruction may take place as casualties of war, or as actions which aim towards the destruction of sites with great value for certain nations. This phenomenon saw its greater rise during the Second World War where a great amount of cultural property was destroyed, damaged or looted. Since then the United Nations adopted the first international treaty concerning the topic which was the Hague Convention in 1954; one that has been signed by most member states. As it will be mentioned further down in this study guide, the United Nations and its members have taken various others measures in order to combat the issue. It is of outmost importance that this issue is to be resolved, since it has serious implications in many aspects of a nation's economy, political and social stability.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Culture

"The set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs."[1]

Cultural Heritage

"Cultural Heritage is 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. Cultural Heritage is often expressed as Tangible or Intangible Cultural Heritage."[2]

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:

a. rare collections and specimens of fauna, flora, minerals and anatomy, and objects of paleontological interest;

[1] "UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity." *UNESCO.org*. N.p., 02 Nov. 2001. Web. 06 Feb. 2017.
[2] "What is Cultural Heritage." *Culture in Development*. N.p., n.d. Web. 06 Feb. 2017.

b. 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 artist and to events of national importance;
c. products of archaeological excavations (including regular and clandestine) or of archaeological discoveries;
d. elements of artistic or historical monuments or archaeological sites which have been dismembered;
e. antiquities more than one hundred years old, such as inscriptions, coins and engraved seals; objects of ethnological interest;
f. 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);
g. original works of statuary art and sculpture in any material; original engravings, prints and lithographs;
h. original artistic assemblages and montages in any material;
i. 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;
j. archives, including sound, photographic and cinematographic archives;
k. articles of furniture more than one hundred years old and old musical instruments."[3]

Immovable Cultural Heritage

"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; 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"[4]

[3] "Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property." *UNESCO.org*. N.p., 14 Nov. 1970. Web. 06 Feb. 2017.
[4] "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage." *UNESCO.org*.

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"[5]

Looting

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

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"[6]

Non-International Armed Conflict

"Armed conflicts that are non-international in nature occurring in one of the High contracting parties"[7]

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As previously mentioned the destruction of cultural property isn't a phenomenon that is firstly observed today but has been present since the ancient years. The phenomenon hasn't stopped since then and if anything it has become more frequent in recent years. The countries that are at the center of the problem are the ones in the Middle East, since the destruction of cultural artifacts is a consequence of either war or ideological driven actions that at times may be profit based. When it comes to ideology the motive is the fact that the destroyers don't value such heritage sites and are against the symbols that they may represent.Cultural heritage may stand of different importance to different people and that is why it is very difficult to adopt an exclusive definition for them.

[5] "Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property." *UNESCO.org*.
[6] "How is the Term "Armed Conflict" Defined in International Humanitarian Law?" *International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)*. ICRC, Mar. 2008. Web.
[7] "How is the Term "Armed Conflict" Defined in International Humanitarian Law?" *International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)*. ICRC, Mar. 2008. Web.

Ideological driven actions

Today, the destruction of cultural artifacts is considered by many an ISIS-related destruction in the Middle East. Destruction of cultural heritage has been characterized as a war crime by the United Nations, something that calls for the measures to be taken in order to combat the issue and protect the cultural artifacts in danger. So, as previously mentioned, the general area that is affected is the Middle East and the two countries that are mostly targeted by ISIS are Syria and Iraq. The countries are fighting back but there are still a lot of consequences concerning cultural heritage, such as the damage or the complete destruction of them along with an impact of great importance to the society as a whole. Syria had 6 UNESCO culture heritage sites and as of today, all six of them have undergone some type of damage.

War Casualties

Apart from ideology driven and an ISIS related attacks, cultural artifacts are simply in danger when it comes to casualties of war. During conflict, both movable and immovable artifacts that are exposed in war zones, are directly affected by attacks that take place during times of conflict.

At the moment, there are 46 World Heritage Sites (WHS) listed in the "World Heritage Sites in danger" list. Societies have been trying to protect the cultural heritage of their country because of educational or historical research and the national value and sense of identity they convey.

Short history of UNESCO's role on the topic

Among all the other results of war, the destruction of cultural heritage is one of the most important ones. There are hundreds of examples that prove that cultural masterpieces have been destroyed in times of conflict all around the world. After the Second World War, when UNESCO was founded (1946), all member-states decided that, along with the educational matters they were facing, the cultural ones were severe too. While the organization started dealing with educational issues upon its establishment, it took many years to start addressing the cultural ones. It was around 1960, when UNESCO started a campaign, during which they relocated 22 monuments that were in danger. The organization's actions regarding cultural heritage led to the adoption of the Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1972 and the establishment of the World Heritage Committee in 1976.

 # 1: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization logo

Causes of destruction of cultural heritage in times of conflict

Destruction of cultural heritage during war periods can be traced back to three main causes; these being the casualties of war, profit seeking and ideology.

When it comes to casualties of war, there are hundreds of examples of heritage that was destroyed during World War II, such as the Royal Castle in Warsaw, Poland and St. Michael's church in Coventry, UK. In times of conflict, the heritage of each and every country is in danger, as it may itself be corrupted, ruined or even destroyed by the armed conflict taking place within the country.

Profit seeking as a cause of the destruction of cultural heritage can be found at all times, from people stealing golden items from ancient tombs, to ISIS looting religious buildings in the Middle East in order to sell the valuable parts in the black markets so that ISIS can fund its activities.

Finally, terrorist groups or conquerors destroy certain artifacts or buildings because they counter their ideologies. Over the past few years, ISIS has destroyed several decorating elements and frescoes from mosques in Mosul because they deemed them as "an erroneous form of creativity, contradicting the basics of sharia".

Consequences of the destruction of cultural heritage

The destruction of cultural heritage has several consequences to a country, both financially and socially.

Sites are one of the main reasons why a place may be popular to tourists, as they visit them in order to learn about the history of the country and the culture of ancient civilizations that lived there. Schools and scientists may also want to see and examine a monument for a project or for research. All the people that visit the site buy tickets, catalogues and souvenirs and part of these resources end up in the country's fund. The destruction of those monuments lessens the number of tourists and consequently, the profit benefiting the economy. Another economic consequence of the destruction of cultural heritage is that people that used to work in the sites will remain unemployed, further straining the economy.

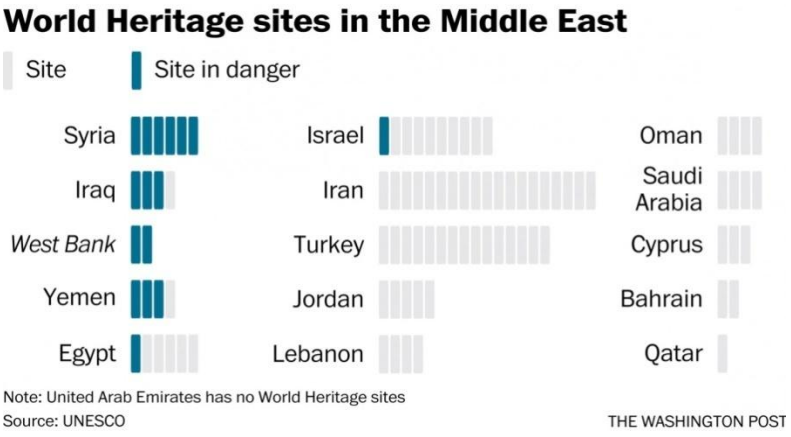
When it comes to the social aspect of the topic, as UNESCO Director-General, Irina Bokova declared at the World Economic Forum in Davos on 17 January 2017, "The destruction of heritage is a destruction of identities". Meaning that when the cultural heritage of a country is destroyed, a part of its history dies with it and the citizens of the country lose a part of their identity. When the monument is destroyed in times of conflict, it is even more difficult for the people to endure the loss of this

part of their history, because they have lost family, friends and loved ones in the war as well.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Iraq

In the past years, the Islamic State has destroyed numerous churches, mosques and other cultural heritage in Iraq, mostly between the fall of Mosul in June 2014 and February 2015. The extremist group has looted several artifacts from the temples and sold them in the black market in order to raise money for their operations.



 # 2: World Heritage sites in the Middle East

A well-known example is the footage ISIS disclosed on the 26th of February 2015 of them destroying numerous ancient artifacts in the Mosul Museum, with almost all of them being originals. They claimed that the artifacts promoted "idolatry" and the event led UNESCO's director-general to call for a meeting of the Security Council regarding the destruction of cultural property in Iraq.

Syria

Syria is another country in the Middle East that tries to deal with ISIS. Terrorists have caused damages in many cultural heritage artifacts in Syria, with the most important loss being several parts of the historic cities of Palmyra and Aleppo. Syria is also a case where ISIS has used parts of the destroyed monuments to fund their organization, despite the UN's ban on the trade of artifacts that were looted from Syria in 2011.

Libya and Yemen

Libya and Yemen are countries with ongoing wars, in which the cultural heritage of the countries are in danger because of the conflicts. Libya is also another country that the Islamic State has targeted and destroyed its artifacts but to a lesser extent. The International Council of Museums noted, in particular, that cultural heritage from the ancient city of Tripoli was being looted and sold illegally all over the world and requested assistance from Interpol and the UN in putting an end to the situation.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization was established in 1946 and is the main UN organization that deals with the issue of cultural heritage around the world. It awards certain sites with the title of a "World Heritage Site", after they have been nominated by the country where they are located in and their authenticity and uniqueness as piece of significant cultural value has been confirmed. Heritages that get the aforementioned title are inscribed on the World Heritage List[8]. The significance of this title is ratified in the World Heritage Convention of 1972. In cooperation with other smaller organizations, UNESCO is running numerous operations concerning the rescue of several heritage sites around the world.

International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

The International Council on Monuments and Sites was established in 1965 and it is 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.

International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)

ICCROM was established by UNESCO in 1959 and it has 110 Member States and numerous associate members, as it is the second expert body consulting the World Heritage Committee. The ICCROM has cooperated with UNESCO in several projects with its main aim being the preservation and restoration of numerous cultural heritage sites.

World Heritage Committee

The World Heritage Committee was established in 1976 and is responsible for the World Heritage Fund and the funding that is delivered to states for the protection and sustaining of their monuments. It has the final say on whether a monument is inscribed on the World Heritage List or not. Above all, it is responsible for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. The Committee has had 40 sessions so far which take place every year since its establishment. The 41st ordinary session is arranged to take place from July 2nd to July 12th2017

 # 3: Logo of the World Heritage Committee

[8] http://whc.unesco.org/en/list

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
1939-1944	During Second World War a massive number of artifacts were destroyed or looted
May 1954	The Hague convention was adopted
November 1970	UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property
1992-1995	The National Library in Sarajevo was destroyed during the Bosnian war, due to territorial disputes
2001	The Bamiyan Buddhas, in Afghanistan was destroyed
February 2015	Mosul museum was destroyed
2015	ISIS occupation of Palmyra in Syria, and other five cultural heritage sites

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

UNESCO declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage

The UNESCO declaration concerning the intentional destruction of cultural heritage was adopted on the 17th of October 2003 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 UNESCO declaration deals with acts of destruction against cultural heritage; these being either movable or immovable artifacts. It underlines measures that should be taken in order to protect cultural heritage during times of conflict and in peacem aking periods.

The Blue Shield is the internationally recognized symbol that identifies cultural property subject to protection during armed conflict. Use of the Blue Shield is defined in Article 8, chapters 16 and 17 of The 1954 Hague Convention.

Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict

The Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict; namely The Hague Convention, was adopted on the 14th of May 1954 due to the catastrophic consequences and losses of the Second World War. The treaty has segments which propose measures for the protection of cultural heritage during

conflict and peacetime and is responsible for imposing sanctions against members that violate it and covers both movable and immovable heritage.

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

The UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property is an international treaty which concerns illicit trafficking of cultural property. It was adopted on 14th of November 1970. As of 2016 131 member states are parts of the treaty.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Apart from the previously mentioned there haven't been any other major international treaties launched by UNESCO concerning the protection of cultural heritage. There have been projects launched which were mainly aiming towards public awareness concerning cultural heritage and any other plan has been conducted by individual organizations which have always respected the treaties signed.

These organizations, such as the Blue Shield or the World Monument Fund, were established in different member states that are cooperating with the government of each country in order to introduce definite measures that will protect cultural heritage, combat the problem and work towards preserving the monuments along with conduction plans of action in emergency situations.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

After the Second World War there were tremendous consequences and losses concerning cultural heritage, therefore nations created the Hague convention in 1954 with the goal of stopping such atrocities from occurring against cultural heritage. In recent events we have experienced massive acts against cultural heritage during times of conflict either intentional or not. Therefore some measures need to be underlined, so as to tackle the issue.

Firstly, one way to protect the artifacts would be through moving them to a safer place in order to protect them from any damage during periods of conflict. This measure wouldn't be ideal for immovable artifacts since they usually are buildings or monuments. Furthermore, moving sites from their historical position would mean that they could lose their historical and national value. In any case, during conflict

heritage should be safeguarded in places that will prevent them from getting damaged, destroyed or looted.

Secondly, security measures and legal legislations should be strengthened in accordance to treaties and conventions signed by each member state. So, for example immovable heritage and movable heritage in museums should be closely safeguarded by the troops of each country in order to lessen the damage, should something happen.

Lastly, concerning the looting of cultural heritage and illicit trafficking in order to stop ISIS from having an increasing income, any trade between nations and the Islamic State shall be prohibited as it is underlined under the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. This measure would eliminate the amount of cultural heritage being looted and being exported from their countries of origin.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Text

"Definition of the Cultural Heritage | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization."Definition of the Cultural Heritage | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.N.p., n.d. Web. 26 Jan. 2017.

Centre, UNESCO World Heritage."Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage."UNESCO World Heritage Centre.N.p., n.d. Web. 26 Jan. 2017.

"What Is Cultural Heritage." Culture in Development.N.p., n.d. Web. 26 Jan. 2017.

Disclaimer: The Choice And The Presentation Of The Facts Contained In This Work Are Those Of The Author And Are Not Necessarily Those Of Unesco, And Do Not Commit The Organization. The Designations Employed And The Presentation Of Material In This Publication Do Not Imply The, and Endorsement On The Part Of The Secretariat Of Unesco Concerning The Legal Interpretation Of Any Of The Terms Contained Within The Work. UNESCO Database of National Cultural Heritage Laws (n.d.): n. pag. Web.

"Pan-African Cultural Manifesto." PrésenceAfricaine No. 71.Hommage à Jean Price-Mars (1969): 124-32. Web.

Chelimo, Gerturde. "Defining Armed Conflict in International Humanitarian Law." Inquires Journal. N.p., 2011. Web.

Lambert, S. Protecting Cultural Heritage in times of Conflict Contributions from the Participants of the International Course on First Aid to Cultural Heritage in times of Conflict. Rome: ICCROM, 2012.

Centre, UNESCO World Heritage."The World Heritage Committee."UNESCO World Heritage Centre.N.p., n.d. Web. 26 Jan. 2017.

"Map: There Are 10 World Heritage Sites in Iraq and Syria. Nine Are in Danger." The Washington Post. WP Company, 1 Sept. 2015. Web. 26 Jan. 2017.

"Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict."SpringerReference (n.d.): n. pag. Web.

UNESCO."Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property."Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.UNESCO, n.d. Web. 26 Jan. 2017.

Multimedia Resources

Press, Associated. "Washington Post: National, World & D.C. Area News and Headlines." *The Washington Post*. WP Company, n.d. Web. 06 Feb. 2017.

"UNESCO." *UNESCO*. N.p., n.d. Web. 06 Feb. 2017.