

CIMUN VI

Chicago International Model United Nations
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United Nations General Assembly Background Guide



Dear Delegates,

It is our distinct pleasure to welcome you to the sixth annual Chicago International Model United Nations. If this is your first time as a delegate at CIMUN, you will soon realize that this will be unlike any other conference that you have ever attended. All committees at CIMUN feature a fully-integrated crisis simulation, forcing delegates to think on their feet and work between multiple committees to solve challenging problems in a variety of forums.

From the General Assembly and Security Council to the Cabinets and Regional Bodies, all committees at CIMUN are vital participants in the crisis, and successful delegations will have to work as a team to coordinate their efforts to best promote their national interests, simulating the work of actual diplomats and politicians. As a result, this background guide and the committee topics you have been assigned are intended only as a starting point. It is much more important to be familiar with the “character” and vital interests of your country than to focus on specifics, as you will inevitably be placed in many situations where you will be forced to think outside of the box and make important decisions in real-time. To assist you with this challenge, we encourage you to take full advantage of our extensive Home Government and Simulations staff and the variety of other resources that will be available during the conference.

Additionally, CIMUN employs a much different philosophy than most other high school conferences. Instead of forcing delegates to work towards unrealistic compromises and pass “consensus” resolutions at any cost, we encourage you to faithfully represent your national interests and to always place your country’s strategic motivations, both public and covert, at the forefront, even if it means being confrontational. Our crisis has been specially designed to pit the interests of key players against each other in ways that will involve every country at the conference, and we strongly advise you to always keep your nation’s own interests in mind.

We will continue to post more specifics, updates, and research materials as the date of the conference approaches. Information on Position Papers and other requirements can be found on our website in the “Position Papers” section. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us or your committee dais. See you in December!

Sincerely,

Greg Young
Undersecretary-General of Simulations
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Tyler Doyle
Director of Present Day Simulation



UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Topic 1: Preventing Balkanization in Minority Areas

Balkanization refers to the geopolitical fragmentation of a region along political, ethnic, linguistic, or religious lines. The term is taken from the Balkan region in Southeast Europe, making it a term to which those with ties to the region sometimes object.

The region of Kurdistan is an excellent example of such cultural division. Kurdistan is a region spanning southeast Turkey, northern Iraq, western Iran, and several regions of Syria. 14 million Kurds inhabit Turkey, 5 million inhabit Iraq, and 4 million inhabit Iran. Historically, Kurds have primarily been concentrated in 11 provinces in southwest Turkey. The Turkish constitution does not recognize ethnic minorities, and most Turkish Kurds feel that they are not adequately represented in government.

In Iraq, Kurds constitute an overwhelming majority in the As Sulaymaniyah, Irbil, and Dahuk governorates. Kurds are also a majority in Iraq's most fruitful oil-producing region, Kirkuk, a fact hotly denied by the now-ousted Hussein government. Historically, Kurdish society has been predominantly nomadic. By 1800, however, over 20% of Kurds in Iraq were living in Kurdish-majority cities. Urban migration led to the development of Kurdish nationalism. Since the early 1960s, Kurdish urban centers have been increasing in population with increasing speed due to escalating armed conflict with central authorities in Baghdad. The destruction of villages and land by widespread bombing, and the effects of this violence on healthcare, education, and other social services has led rural and nomadic Kurds to turn to their urban brethren for safety and community. Kurds speak a variety of dialectic languages. This is especially true in Iraq, where there is no majority language. The plurality language is known as Sorani.

Kurds make up nine percent of Iran's population. Historically, these Kurds concentrated in the Zagros Mountain area along Iran's western borders with Turkey and Iraq, adjacent with the Kurdish population of those countries. Just as in Iraq, a majority of Kurds in Iran have historically been nomadic. Today, less than 15% of Iranian Kurds are nomadic. Kurdish cities in Iran, which grew in population during the seventeenth century, include Bakhtaran, Sandaj, and Mahabad. There are also large groups of Kurds living in northern Khorasan. These are the descendants of Kurds who were forcibly removed from western Iran by the government during the seventeenth century.

Kurds do constitute a distinct ethnic group; however, they are not without ethnic conflicts. The most prominent of these conflicts is religion. About two thirds of Kurds in Turkey practice Sunni Islam, while the remaining third are Shia of the Alevi sect. Historically, the Alevi have lived in isolated communities in the mountains of southeastern Turkey and western Syria. Since the 1950s, Kurdish Alevi have been migrating from their

villages to the cities of central Anatolia. Ethnically Turkish and Kurdish Alevi generally have good relations.

Wealthy Turkish Kurds are much more likely to assimilate into Turkish society than those of lower economic strata. Wealthy Kurds are often fluent in Turkish, disparaging Kurdish as the language of the uneducated.

It is not only the Kurds in Turkey who have internal conflict. By the 1970s, competition between Alevi and Sunni Turks had led to the revival of traditional sectarian tensions. In 1978-9, the combination of economic and religious tensions resulted in a series of violent sectarian clashes in Kahramanmaraş, Corum, and several other cities.

Additionally, a small but unrecorded number of Kurds were adherents of the secretive Yazidi sect, which historically has been persecuted by both Sunni and Shia Muslims. Small communities of Yazidi live in Mardin, Siirt, and Sanli Urfa provinces. Yazidi are also found among Kurds in Armenia, Iran, and Iraq. The Yazidi of Turkey believe that the government does not protect them from religious persecution. Almost fifty percent of all Yazidi in Kurdistan had immigrated to Germany, where they felt they would be free from persecution, by 1990.

Tribal ties still constitute an important part of the modern Kurd's social identity. They can be an important source of support in times of conflict and can be used to effectively mobilize communities against outside influences.

Though Kurdistan is one of the most vivid examples of such geopolitical ethnic-based division, many other similar conflicts exist around the world, especially in former European colonies and on the fringes of large states and empires. Large minority populations are not always a recipe for strife, as many states have been able to successfully integrate their minorities into the larger society, either through assimilation or by granting federal autonomy. It is the task of this body to evaluate how the United Nations can better support the peaceful integration of minorities, especially in conflict-torn areas such as Kurdistan and Transcaucasia.

Topic 2: Stability and Development in the GUAM Region

Founded twelve years ago, GUAM refers to the joint cooperative organization formed between Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova known as the Organization for Democracy and Development. As former Soviet republics, all four of the organization's members, along with many of their neighbors, share a common political and economic history. Though often considered a "fringe" region of the former Soviet Union, their natural resource wealth has now made GUAM a region of far-reaching geopolitical importance, and it is imperative that efforts be made to foster the region's long-term stability and sustainable development.

About 16% of the geographic territory of Azerbaijan, particularly the Nagorno-Karabakh region, is militarily occupied by Armenia as a result of the 1994 war between the two countries. Over 800,000 ethnic Azerbaijanis have been driven from Armenia and the Nagorno-Karabakh region, while over 200,000 ethnic Armenians have been driven from Azerbaijan into Armenia and the occupied territory. Azerbaijan is currently seeking to establish a transit route through Armenia reaching the exclave of the autonomous Naxcivian Republic, the population of which is 99% ethnic Azerbaijani.

Azerbaijan is a primary source nation for human trafficking. Women and children are shipped to Turkey and the United Arab Emirates for commercial sexual exploitation. Victims from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Moldova pass through the nation en route to the aforementioned destinations. Men and young boys are trafficked to Russia for forced hard labor. Fellow GUAM member nation Georgia is also a source of victims for this type of human trafficking.

Financial issues have stalled the signing of a boundary agreement between Ukraine and its northern neighbor Belarus since 1997. Ukraine has one remaining border issue with Russia, that of the line of demarcation through the Kerch Strait and Sea of Azov. Expert-level discussions continue despite the drafting of an unsigned agreement in 2003. Romania and Ukraine have consulted the International Court of Justice on the topic of Ukraine's administration of the Zmiynyy/Serpilor Island. Romania opposes Ukraine's reopening of a navigation canal from the Danube border through Ukraine to the Black Sea. Additionally, a new conflict has emerged between Russia and Ukraine over Russia's use of a naval base on the Crimean peninsula. Following the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia was granted a limited-term lease on the base which is due to expire, depriving Russia of one of its vital ports on the Black Sea.

Moldova is one of the poorest nations in Europe. In 2001, it became the first former Soviet state to elect a Communist as its President. Russian forces have occupied Moldovan territory known as Transnistria east of the Dniester River since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Russia openly supports the secessionist movement in the region and is one of the breakaway republic's largest financial supporters. Moldova and Ukraine operate joint customs posts throughout the region, which remains under the supervision of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

South Ossetia is a disputed autonomous separatist state within the geographic borders of Georgia. The South Ossetian government has made conflicting statements both in active anticipation of, and in rejection of, absorption into Russia. In the Summer of 2008, tensions in the region boiled over and led to military engagement between Georgia and Russia. Following the initial encounter, Russian forces quickly subdued the Georgian resistance and proceeded to invade Georgia-proper, ostensibly to defend South Ossetian autonomy, and have occupied parts of the country ever since. Russia has since begun to withdraw many of its troops, but unilaterally recognized South Ossetian independence and has pledged to defend it should its autonomy be threatened again. Nicaragua is the only other nation to recognize South Ossetia as an independent sovereign nation.

The strategic significance of the GUAM region cannot be overstated. As a major shipping route for oil and natural gas, the region serves as a gateway between the East and the West. Constructed in 2005, the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline is a major artery for the transport of oil from the Caspian Sea through Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey for consumption and sale in Europe. Many Western nations view the BTC pipeline as a way to circumvent Russian control of the major shipping routes into Europe, which has made the operation and control of the pipeline highly controversial. Opponents of the pipeline, including Russia, doubt that its economic output will justify the high costs of construction and maintenance, and cite security concerns, especially with the rise of Islamic extremism in the region and the ongoing territorial conflicts.

The last decade has shown extreme promise for the GUAM region, but it is still a region in transition, and appropriate policies must be enacted to ensure long-term political

and economic viability. The General Assembly must focus on ending the territorial infighting, supporting lasting political reform, and cementing recent economic gains.

Topic 3: The Status of Kosovo

A predominantly Serb-populated region until the 14th century, Kosovo shares its borders with Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, and Macedonia. The Serbian Empire was defeated in 1389 in the Battle of Kosovo, and the region spent the subsequent five centuries under the Ottoman Empire. Turks and Albanians gradually moved into the region, and by the late 1800s the ethnic majority in Kosovo had switched to Albanian muslims. Kosovo remained under Ottoman rule until 1912, when Serbia regained control of the region in the first Balkan War.

Kosovo was an autonomous statue under Serbia until 1989. Under the rule of Slobodan Milosevic, Serbia instituted a new constitution, revoking Kosovo's autonomous status. Kosovo's Albanian leadership responded by passing a referendum declaring Kosovo independent in 1991. This prompted Serbia, under Milosevic, to carry out oppressive measures against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. Kosovo's unofficial government, led by Ibrahim Rugova, attempted to win international favor, assistance, and recognition by limiting their reactions to passive resistance. This tactic was not popular with all, and soon the Kosovo Liberation Army was formed. Insurgence attacks by the KLA prompted a counterinsurgency campaign by Serbia, including massacres and massive exulsions of ethnic Albanians.

When Milosevic rejected a proposed settlement, NATO began a three-month bombing campaign in March of 1999 which forced Serbia to agree to withdraw military and police forces from Kosovo. Later in 1999, with the passage of Security Council Resolution 1244, the United Nations placed Kosovo's sovereignty under the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, awaiting determination of Kosovo's permanent status. The UN led negotiations between Serbian and Kosovar leadership, held between 2005-2007, ended inconclusively.

The Kosovo Assembly declared independence on February 17, 2008. Since then, over fifty nations have recognized Kosovo and a sovereign state. Serbia rejects Kosovo's independence, and has, with the backing of the General Assembly, sought as advisory opinion from the ICJ on the legality under international law of Kosovo's declaration of sovereignty. Ethnic Serb municipalities along Kovoso's northern border challenge the final location of the Kosovo-Serbia border. Several thousand NATO-led KFOR peacekeepers under the UNMIK banner remain in the region, keeping peace between the ethnic Albanian majority and the Serb minority.

Kosovo is a landlocked region slightly larger than the US state of Delaware. It is home to approximately 2 million people. Ethnically, Kosovo is 88% Albanian and 7% Serb. The remaining 5% of the population includes Bosnian, Gorani, Turk, Asgkali, and Egyptian. The dominant religions are Muslim, Serbian Orthodox Christian, and Roman Catholic. Kosovo's capital is Pristina, home to a developing government system based on UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari's "Plan for Kosovo's Supervised Independence". Kosovo is a party to the ITUC and the WFTU. Albanians prefer the term Kosovar as both the noun referring to residents of Kosovo and the adjective referring to things of Kosovo. Serbs favor

the terms Kosovac and Kosovski. Kosovan, a neutral term coined by the international community, is acceptable for both purposes.

Kosovo has the poorest citizens in Europe, with an average yearly per capita income of \$2,300 USD. The unemployment rate stands at 40%, with 37% of the population below the poverty line. Kosovo's official currency is the Euro, although the Serbian dinar is also used. The national budget is \$1.19 billion USD, with national expenditures outreaching that by about \$3 million USD. There is a limited and unreliable electrical supply in the region due to technological and financial limitations.

Does your country recognize a sovereign Kosovo? If so, is it a current or potential trading partner? Political ally? If your country does not recognize Kosovo as independent, what, if anything are you willing to do to support Serbia's position? How far is your nation willing to go to fix Kosovo's financial and humanitarian situations?

Selected Resources:

- http://www.countrywatch.com/facts/facts_default.aspx?type=text&topic=SEBAL
- <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/kurdistan.htm>
- http://www.tothepointnews.com/images/stories/kurdistan_map.jpg
- <http://guam-organization.org/en/node/363>
- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/up.html>
- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/aj.html>
- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gg.html>
- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/md.html>
- <http://obrag.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/08/georgia-area.gif>
- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kv.html>