HISAR SCHOOL

JUNIOR MODEL UNITED NATIONS 2018

"Globalization: Creating a Common Language"

GA 6 Social Affairs Committee

Preventing Smuggling of Cultural Heritage by Terrorist Groups

RESEARCH REPORT

Forum: Social Affair GA 6

Issue: Preventing Smuggling of Cultural Heritage by Terrorist Groups

Student Officer: Meir Susan

Introduction

Cultural heritage has been smuggled throughout history particularly during conflict and post conflict situations. Today, these crimes are increasingly linked to international criminal activity including the financing of terrorist groups. One of the few ways they finance their organization is by illegally moving cultural properties through diverse markets, such as auction houses and the Internet. Trafficking has also become an important source of money for terrorist groups. It is sometimes enabled through the support of insiders such as corrupt customs or border officials, law enforcement officers, and dealers in art and antiquities.

Definition of Key Terms

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

2. 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.

3. Illicit traffic: Illegal trading or selling of specified goods.

General Overview

Throughout the last decade, the world has seen noticeable increase in terrorist attacks, due to these terrorist attacks the cultural heritage of countries affected by conflict are in danger by destruction of the cultural heritage as well as terrorist organizations looting and trafficking it.

Terrorist groups are using this method as a tactic to finance their organization and generate an income, which is then used to support their recruitment and operational efforts.

Because of this issue being multinational tracking trafficked cultural product can involve multiple national authorities. Trafficked items are looted in one country and travel across several others before reaching their final destination. When items are intercepted, local authorities do not always have the necessary expertise to identify them, assess their value, or grasp the scale of the criminal operation behind a single act of trafficking.

If we look at some examples of terrorist groups destroying and looting cultural heritage it is safe to say that The IS (Islamic State) releasing a video of the fiery destruction of the Temple Baalshamin is an example that shook the world. A short amount of time after the video was released, the IS announced that "The destruction of the sites were religiously motivated". The Islamic state controls large stretches of Syria with high amount of cultural heritage under their rule and it is the responsibility of UN to assure the safety of this cultural

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Iraq

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

Syria

Syria is another country in the Middle East that tries to deal with ISIS. Terrorists have looted and caused damages in many cultural heritage artifacts in Syria.

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.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

As put in the organizations own philosophy, UNESCO realizes that preventing smuggling and illicit trafficking of cultural property is the core of the safeguarding process of cultural heritage and its development. The first proposition of a new draft on the issue aforementioned was initially proposed to UNESCO by the Netherlands in 1948 and was the basis of the Hague Convention signed in 1954.

Timeline of Events

1954	**The Hague Convention** It regulated the conduct of nations during war and military occupation in order to assure the protection of cultural sites
1970	**1970 UNESCO Convention** It requested member states to take necessary steps to recover and return any kind of cultural property imported illegally

1995	**UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects** Regulating the exports of cultural objects for the purpose of protecting it.
2013	**Resolution 2100** Established Peacekeeping force for Mali to protect is cultural heritage
2017	**Resolution 2347** Measures of stopping terrorist organizations from trafficking cultural products

Treaties and Events

- **Hague Convention**

- **1970 UNESCO Convention**

- **UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects**

- **Resolution 2100**

- **Resolution 2347**

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

RESEARCH REPORT

Cultural property is part of the common heritage of humankind. It is so unique and important a testimony of the evolution and identity of peoples, that the importance of protecting it has been mentioned in several international meeting. The first step towards solving the issue of trafficking cultural heritage was made in The Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, adopted at the Hague in 1954. The main aim of this convention was to assure the protection of cultural sites, monuments and repositories, including museums, libraries and archives. The next Convention was on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which was adopted by UNESCO in 1970. The next big step towards this issue came 25 years later by the UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects. In this convention the main focus was recognizing the importance of private commerce in the trafficking of cultural property. Looking through recent years, one of the steps of stopping illicit trade of Cultural products and the preventing the destruction of Cultural heritage will be With UN Security Council Resolution 2100 (2013), the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). It mandated MINUSMA "to assist the transitional authorities of Mali, as necessary, in protecting from attack the cultural and historical sites in Mali..". The most recent step would be the adoption of UN S/RES/2347 in this resolution it Condemns the unlawful destruction of cultural heritage, including the destruction of religious sites and artifacts, and the looting and smuggling of cultural property from archaeological sites, museums, libraries, archives, and other sites, notably by terrorist groups.

Possible Solutions

There are many possible solutions that can be proposed but one of the simplest and the most effective solution would be the investigation of border customs, it is found that most of these crimes are enabled through corrupt government officials.

For another possible solution, keeping track of cultural heritage would be efficient, with the technologies we have today it would be reasonable to use the technologies we have for chips that would tell the location of the product or even security cameras that would inform the officials.

Bibliography

"Here Are the Ancient Sites ISIS Has Damaged and Destroyed." National Geographic, National Geographic Society, 27 July 2016, news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/09/150901-isis-destruction-looting-ancient-sites-iraq-syria-archaeology/.

"Navigation." World Customs Organization, www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/enforcement-and-compliance/activities-and-programmes/trafficking-of-cultural-objects.aspx.

"S/RES/2347 (2017) Security Council Subsidiary Organs." United Nations, United Nations, www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/s/res/2347-(2017).

"Security Council Condemns Destruction, Smuggling of Cultural Heritage by Terrorist Groups, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2347 (2017) | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases." United Nations, United Nations, www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc12764.doc.htm.antoaneta.seitz. "United Nations Office on Drugs and

Crime." Strengthening Capacity to Counter Terrorism in Nigeria, www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-

crime/intro/emerging-crimes/trafficking-in-cultural-property.html.