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

Topic: Preservation of Cultural Heritage in a Crisis

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Abstract:

Cultural preservation refers to the protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage, including tangible and intangible forms, to ensure its survival for future generations. It involves the preservation of cultural artifacts, traditions, languages, and practices that are considered valuable and significant. The concept of cultural preservation is highly debated, with different perspectives on its normative value. Some argue for the intrinsic value of cultural preservation, emphasizing the importance of preserving cultural diversity and identity. Cultural preservation can be achieved through various means, such as the use of technology to document and digitize cultural heritage. It also requires addressing challenges such as lack of funding, trained manpower, and copyright issues. Overall, cultural preservation plays a

crucial role in shaping our sense of identity, promoting awareness of cultural complexity and addressing conflicts related to cultural heritage.

Introduction:

At times of crises such as wars and natural disasters, historical and cultural artifacts tend to be vandalized and stolen. These times of crisis allow criminal groups and rivaling nations and countries to take advantage of the situation to do what they desire to strip a country away from its identity and integral value to further weaken them all in the name of profit and for politics. This situation isn't also strictly about wars and natural disasters, the vandalizing of artifacts and cultural sites is a great problem that should not be overlooked. Fortunately, Security Council Resolution 2347 focuses primarily on this specific issue and outlines the problems and solutions to this overarching issue.

Key Terms:

- Cultural heritage: Can be defined as the legacy of physical artifacts (cultural property) and intangible attributes of a group or society inherited from the past.

- Conserve: Protecting something especially something of environmental or cultural importance from harm or destruction.

- Catastrophes: An event causing great and usually sudden damage or suffering or a disaster.

- Vandalism: Acts involving deliberate destruction or damage to public or private property.

Key actors:

- International Council of Museums (ICOM): committed to the research, conservation, continuation and communication to society about the world's natural and cultural heritage.

- Europa Nostra: is a pan-European network of 250 member organisations and 150 associated organisations that aims to safeguard Europe's cultural and natural heritage

- Europeana: is Europe's digital platform. Its mission is to empower the cultural heritage sector in its digital transformation.

- Network of National Museum Organisations (NEMO): Represents the museum community of the member states of the Council of Europe. All together, NEMO's members speak for over 30,000 museums across Europe.

- International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS): is a non-governmental international organisation dedicated to the conservation of the world's monuments and sites.

- International Centre for the Study of the Preservations and Restorations of Cultural Property (ICCROM): is an intergovernmental organization dedicated to the preservation of cultural heritage worldwide in many forms.

Previous attempts:

Resolution 2347 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. Operative clause 4 *"Affirms that directing unlawful attacks against sites and buildings dedicated to religion, education, art, science or charitable purposes, or historic monuments may constitute, under certain circumstances and pursuant to international law a war crime and that perpetrators of such attacks must be brought to justice;"* explains that if any individual, nation or organization must be brought to justice and classifies the looting and stealing of cultural properties as war crimes.

Potential Solutions:

- Education: this can be done via campaigns that raise awareness to this ongoing problem online or through organizations to show the importance of cultural artifacts.

- Diplomatic discussions: this ensures that whenever a crisis hits a nation, the partnering nation supports it to preserve its cultural artifacts

- Community involvement: This can be done by promoting cultural events, organizing cultural tours, and supporting local artists and artisans. By involving the community, people can gain a sense of ownership and pride in their heritage, which can help to preserve it.

- Funding: to aid countries affected by a crisis to bring back its artifacts and to utilize the funds to protect them from future crises.

- Intelligence: working alongside intelligence and logistical organizations like INTERPOL to stay updated on the movement of artifacts and ensuring they are not in the wrong hands

Sources:

Pro tip: to find information related to your country, the websites need to at least end with .gov, .edu or .org.

https://www.unesco.org/en

https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2347%20(2017)

https://icom.museum/en/

https://www.europanostra.org/

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