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Director's Welcome Letter

Dear delegates,

I am honored to welcome you to AUSMUN 2024, where you will play an essential role in shaping global discourse about world issues. This year's conference is set to be a platform for innovation, collaboration, and meaningful dialogue. Here we will explore global issues, analyze the complexities of the same, and propose solutions that satisfy the varying perspectives of countries in the international community.

It is important to remember that you think critically, engage in constructive debate, and seek to achieve common ground with your fellow delegates. At AUSMUN, we encourage you to approach this experience with an open mind and a commitment to finding a solution. This conference is not only a simulation but also an opportunity for you to develop skills that benefit your academic, professional, and personal lives. It is a chance to form connections with individuals who share a similar passion for global issues and diplomacy. I encourage you to make the most of this unique experience and to challenge your limits by thinking beyond the ordinary. Together, we will all contribute to the legacy of excellence that AUSMUN is known for.

I look forward to meeting you all and witnessing the remarkable contributions each of you will make to our conference. Welcome to AUSMUN 2024, and let us embark on this enriching journey together.

Warm regards,

Sarvagya Sharma

Director of Research

AUSMUN 2024

Moderator's Welcome Letter

Dear distinguished delegates,

To start, we would like to welcome you to AUSMUN 2024! It is a pleasure to serve as your moderator for this conference. We are honored to have you all in the United Nations General Assembly Third Committee: Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues. We are thrilled to set into motion the 17th annual AUSMUN and have set our hearts on creating a memorable experience for you all. We hope that this conference will boost and strengthen your debating and speaking skills, your overall knowledge on some of the most crucial issues present today, and spark within you the passion to make a difference.

As the conference draws near, we welcome all the delegates, whether you have little or ample amount of experience. We encourage all delegates to interact with each other, as well as with the chairs, to ensure a lively conference where all delegates feel welcome and heard. We hope this conference is a delightful experience for all of you. We look forward to meeting you all and discussing the question of Uyghur Muslims in China and protecting cultural heritage from ISIS destruction in Syria and Iraq. Please do not hesitate to contact us at ga3ausmun24@gmail.com.

Best regards,

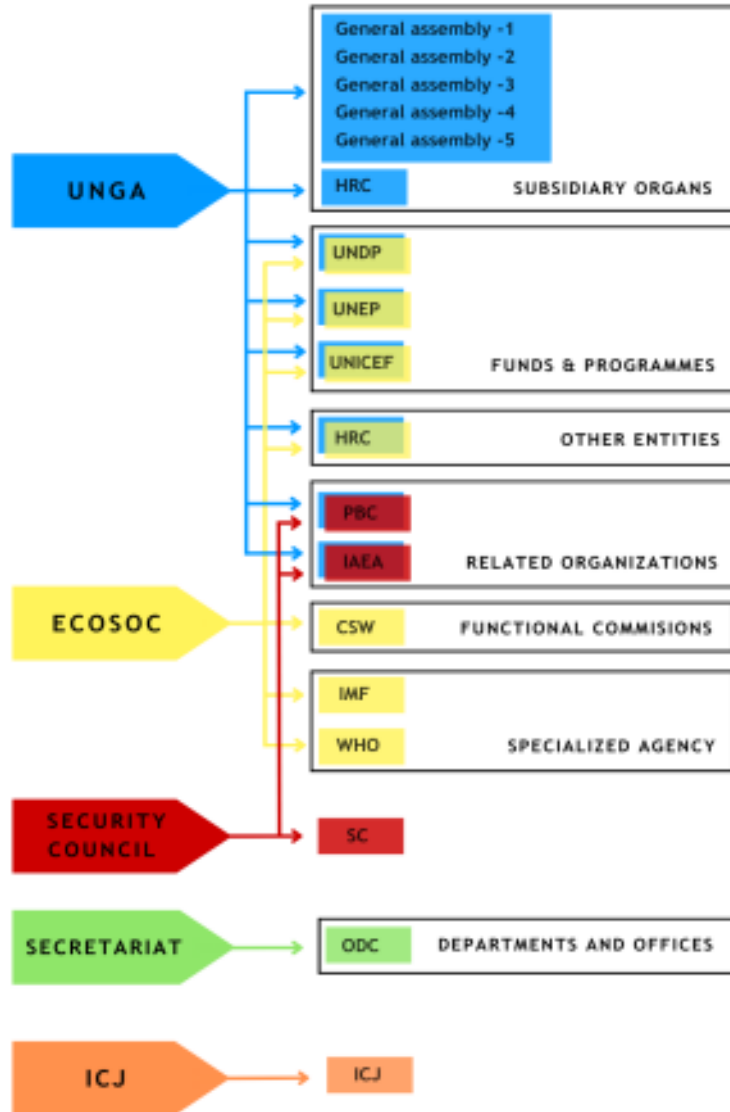
Mariam Maher, Aws Mohamed, Mahra Almesaybeh, AbdelRahman AbdelTwab.



Brief About the Committee

The Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is engaged with the broad category of Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural issues that are faced globally, focusing a large part of its work on questions of Human Rights. The primary focus of the UNGA's Third Committee is to examine human rights questions, specifically those that violate the principles established by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - which was adopted by the UNGA in 1948. The historic document outlines the fundamental human rights that are to be universally protected, and thus, the committee approaches issues such as, but not limited to: the advancement of women, the protection of children, the preservation of cultural heritage, and the treatment of refugees - to name a few. The committee is funded by the UN's regular budget, which is collected from each Member State and approved by the UNGA.

This diagram visually represents the UN system and corresponds to AUSMUN. It reflects the relationships between committees and clearly demonstrates the committee's position, significance and powers as defined under the UN charter.



The Function of the Committee

The United Nations General Assembly Third Committee (GA3) focuses on social, humanitarian, and cultural issues. This committee addresses a wide range of topics, including human rights, social development, the advancement of women, the rights of children, indigenous issues, and matters related to refugees and displaced persons. It plays a significant role in shaping international policies and resolutions aimed at addressing these issues on a global scale. Each member of the GA-3 shall have one vote. Decisions in the committee shall be made based on the majority of the present and voting members of the participating states in the committee. If a member abstains from voting during roll call, then they are not considered to be entitled to a vote (not voting). Amendments to a draft resolution are formally proposed orally from the floor. The Chairs choose the order in which amendments are considered if there are multiple ones presented. Before the adoption of the entire text, a Member State may also cast a vote on certain parts of a draft resolution. A paragraph, a section of a paragraph, or several paragraphs may be the subject of this. After a maximum of two delegates have spoken in favor of and two delegations have spoken against the proposal, the request for a paragraph vote will be put to an immediate vote if it is contested and will be approved by a simple majority. Following a vote on a paragraph, the entire draft resolution or decision will be discussed. It is still assumed that adoption will occur without a vote. The draft resolution will be rejected in its entirety if all of its operative clauses are rejected.

Topic 1: The Question of Uyghur Muslims in China

Summary and History

Out of China's fifty-five officially recognized ethnic minorities, Uyghurs are to be indigenous to the northwest region of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region “(XUAR)”. There are about twelve million Uyghurs living in the XUAR, and most of them are Muslims. Uyghurs are considered closely related to the people of Central Asia in terms of culture and ethnicity. Human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch both assert that hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs have been condemned to prison and that over a million “Uyghurs” have been forcibly held in China's extensive network of "re-education centers". The international community has strongly denounced China's persecution of Uyghurs. There has been a prohibition on the religious and cultural practices of Muslim Uyghurs since the Chinese Communist Party was founded in 1949. Several nations, including the United States, have charged China with genocide in the “XUAR”.

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, among other prominent human rights organizations, have published reports alleging crimes against humanity committed by China. China has refuted any claims of violating human rights in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, stating that the "re-education camp" system is intended to counter separatist movements and radical Islamic groups in the area. Due to China's strict media control, the story of the experiences of Uyghurs in the XUAR— from forced sterilization and mass monitoring to detention – has only recently gained traction. Over the past decade, concerning developments have emerged, partly due to leaked information from the media and the departure of Uyghur

activists from China. Some international observers, including the United States, have characterized these actions as a violation of human rights and, currently, as a genocide.

Today, there are over a million Uyghurs living outside of their native Xinjiang, in over fifty different countries, including China, Turkey, and the United States. Particularly in China, they experience rising rates of prejudice and oppression. Evidence of the Chinese government's maltreatment of ethnic minorities residing in XUAR, its western territory, has been mounting for years. The Uyghur riots began in the early 1900s when the Uyghurs proclaimed their independence and ended in 1949 when communist China took total control of Xinjiang. In Xinjiang, anti-Han sentiment, which refers to opposition or hostility towards the Han Chinese ethnic group, increased during the 1990s and has periodically escalated into violence, often connected with separatist tendencies. In the 2009 Xinjiang riots, which the Chinese attributed to Uyghurs seeking their own state, approximately 200 people lost their lives. Following the release of a decree by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2017, which made it apparent that "religions in China must be Chinese in orientation" and "adapt themselves to socialist society," there was a renewed crackdown on religious rituals that disproportionately affected the Uyghur population (*China (Includes Tibet, Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Macau)*, 2022). A huge security clampdown in recent years has crushed opposition, resulting in the incarceration of up to a million individuals in 300–400 facilities, including prisons, pretrial detention centers, and "political education" camps. Beyond the confinement centers, ongoing persecution persists, including family separations, arbitrary arrests, forced disappearances, the erasure of cultural and religious practices, and restrictions on freedom of movement. These actions, according to the

Chinese government is essential to stopping terrorism and eliminating Islamic extremism

(*Gov.cn: The Chinese Central Government's Official Web Portal*, 2019).

Discourse on the Issue

The treatment of Uyghur Muslims in China, particularly in XUAR, has raised serious concerns in the international community. The Chinese government has implemented a series of policies and practices that have been criticized as violations of international law, including crimes against humanity. Officials in China argue that these actions are necessary for national defense, citing concerns about the perceived radicalization of Uyghurs. The government's response includes the establishment of detention facilities often referred to as "re-education" or "vocational training centers." These facilities, according to reports, are places where Uyghur Muslims face immense pressure to renounce Islam and pledge loyalty to the Chinese Communist Party. The conditions within these facilities are reported to be dire, with constant surveillance through cameras and microphones, as well as allegations of torture and sleep deprivation. Furthermore, the XUAR Regulation on De-esterification, introduced in March 2017, is a key legal framework in this context. It restricts the dissemination and teaching of religious knowledge, seeking to reduce the influence of religious practices in the region. President Xi Jinping has labeled Uyghurs responsible for the "toxicity of religious extremism" (Maizland, 2022). The Chinese government's goal is to "sinicize" religion by bringing it under state control and promoting compatibility with socialist ideology (*China (Includes Tibet, Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Macau)*, 2022). These measures are defended by Chinese authorities as necessary to combat the "three evils" – international terrorism, religious extremism, and separatism. In the

government's portrayal, these facilities are framed as educational or vocational centers, downplaying their true nature. There has been a deliberate shift in terminology to mask the oppressive reality. Overall, the Chinese government's actions have drawn attention to the repression of Uyghur culture and religion, and they have been met with strong international condemnation and calls for accountability. The situation highlights the broader issues of human rights, religious freedom, and ethnic identity in China.

Past International Organization (IO) Actions & Latest Developments

Several prominent international organizations, notably the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), have been involved in the debate on how Uyghur Muslims are being treated in China. The UN has addressed the issue several times through organizations like the Human Rights Council, with a number of member nations voicing their discomfort. Formal resolutions or penalties, however, have encountered significant difficulties as a result of China's veto power in the UN Security Council (UNSC) and other nations' reticence, frequently motivated by political or economic factors. The lack of effective enforcement measures is one of the main obstacles to resolving the Uyghur problem at the UN, making it difficult to pressure China to alter its policies.

The OIC, an association of nations with a predominance of Muslims, has also had conversations with several countries about the issue. OIC members have expressed concern about how Uyghurs are being treated, underscoring the importance of this issue in the Islamic community.

In addition, the European Union (EU) has expressed concern about the plight of Uyghur Muslims in China. The EU has taken action, including sanctioning Chinese officials and organizations who are alleged to have violated human rights in the Xinjiang region. These initiatives highlight the concern's worldwide reach and the EU's dedication to upholding human rights.

As of the most recent events, there were few tangible steps that would have a substantial impact on China, despite the Uyghur issue continuing to be a topic of discussion on a global scale. It is clear that a coordinated and effective reaction was required, one that may involve a larger coalition of countries. This highlights the need to address the plight of Uyghur Muslims in China on a worldwide level.

The Uyghur problem continues to be a complicated one that warrants a coordinated international solution. More coordinated action is still required, even if a number of countries and international organizations have expressed their concerns and issued penalties. The situation facing Uyghur Muslims serves as a stark reminder of the larger fight for human rights, morality in business, and the value of diplomatic collaboration on a scale that goes beyond national and commercial concerns. It is morally required of the international community to keep working to resolve this humanitarian catastrophe.

Questions that the Committee and Resolutions Should Address:

- What are the long-term socioeconomic and geopolitical implications of the initiation of Uyghur detention camps in Xinjiang, China?

- What are some possible ways the UN can, within its powers, put an end to the mistreatment of the Uyghurs?
- What solutions can be proposed to reduce the spread of anti-Islamic literacy in Xinjiang and nations internationally?
- How can awareness be spread on the issue at hand when sources and information is limited?

Timeline of the Major Events

- **1990-2000s:** Protests and sporadic violence occur in Xinjiang with some Uyghur separatist groups advocating for independence.
- **2009:** Urumqi riots, a violent conflict between Uyghurs and Han Chinese, results in numerous casualties.
- **2014:** China launches a nationwide “Strike Hard” campaign targeting Uyghur Muslims, with mass arrests and surveillance intensifying in Xinjiang.
- **2017:** Reports begin to surface about mass internment camps, where Uyghur Muslims are forcibly detained. Chinese authorities claim these are ‘reeducation centers’.
- **2020:** The United States government designates China’s treatment of Uyghurs as genocide.
- **2021:** China faces increased international pressure as allegations of forced labor and systematic human rights abuses against Uyghurs persist.

- **2022:** China’s treatment of Uyghur Muslims remains a significant point of contention in international relations, with human rights organizations and governments worldwide continuing to demand accountability.

Suggestions For Further Research:

- Uyghur Cultural Identity in Xinjiang
- Forced Labor in Xinjiang and Global Supply Chains
- Impact of Sanctions on China's Uyghur Policies
- Uyghur Diaspora and Advocacy Efforts
- Uyghurs in the Chinese Education System
- Uyghur Women's Rights in Xinjiang

Suggested Resources:

Uyghur Human Rights Project, “The Happiest Muslims in the World”: Disinformation, Propaganda, and the Uyghur Crisis, July 28, 2020

[<https://perma.cc/PSW2-MKYK>]

Amnesty International, “Like we were enemies in a war”: China's mass internment, torture and persecution of Muslims in Xinjiang, June 2021

[<https://perma.cc/4VPX-ZA9V>]

Human Rights Watch, China: Big Data Program Targets Xinjiang’s Muslims, Dec. 9, 2020 [<https://perma.cc/M29L-7GZV>]

Break Their Lineage, Break Their Roots.’’ Human Rights Watch, 20 Apr. 2021,
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<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-xinjiang-uyghurs-muslims-repression-genocide-human-rights>
- Organization of Islamic Cooperation. (2023). *High-Level Delegation from OIC Member States and OIC General Secretariat Visits China*. High-Level Delegation from OIC Member States and OIC General Secretariat Visits China.
https://www.oic-oci.org/topic/?t_id=39400&t_ref=26575&lan=en



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Of Genocide.” *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*.

<https://www.rferl.org/a/europe-china-uyghurs-genocide/31891097.html>

Topic 2: Protecting Cultural Heritage in Iraq and Syria from ISIS Destruction: Preventing Cultural Looting

Summary & History

In the case of building peace and stability, the protection of cultural heritage and antiquities within war zones is of utmost importance. Armed conflict brings with it a flurry of destruction to both public and private property but, in recent decades, combatants have introduced an additional method of gaining leverage. This is in the form of cultural aggression, which is the destruction, or looting, of cultural property (Renfrew, 2021). Looting, in this context, is done through the unrecorded destruction or excavation of archeological sites, with the intention of providing artifacts for sale on the illicit market for antiquities.

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is a transnational militant Islamist terrorist group that first emerged from the remnants of Al Qaeda in Iraq in 2004. The group began to fade in 2007, in the wake of U.S. troops' presence in Iraq; however, taking advantage of growing instability in both Iraq and Syria, the organization reemerged in 2011 and was officially founded as The Islamic State in April of 2013 (Mark V, et al, 2021).

The organized destruction of cultural property by ISIS has been regarded as some of the worst in history. ISIS has methodically targeted historical sites in both Iraq and Syria, not only to erase and destroy their significance but also to loot artifacts and produce income in order to fund their terrorist activities. This is in direct violation of international law; therefore, it is vital that stronger measures be introduced to protect stolen artifacts from being smuggled into illicit markets. ISIS' actions began drawing significant international attention in 2014. At this time it had claimed over half of Syrian territory and gained control of several important cities in Iraq,

including Mosul - Iraq's industrial capital. ISIS, compared to other terrorist organizations at the time, was well-financed and able to pay salaries to its members, which sparked questions about where that income was coming from. Most of this revenue was from oil reserves in Iraq, though a significant portion came from the illegal sale of stolen artifacts - such as, but not limited to, relics from Iraq's ancient cities of Nimrud and Palmyra. Though the exact numbers are unknown, the U.S. The Department of State believes that "ISIS has garnered over several million dollars in antiquities since mid-2014." This is supplemented by the government of Russia, which has stated the profit generated from the illicit trade is an estimated US \$150-200 million per year (Mark V. et al, 2021).

Cultural aggression is a form of cultural cleansing, and is a tactic used by combatants to erase the rich history and cultural identities of their victims – wiping away their worldly prominence and profoundly degrading the preservation of knowledge. In light of ISIS using cultural heritage as a weapon of war to market and finance their violence, it is reasonable to suggest that protecting cultural property has a direct link to international peace. Thus, given the long-term ramifications of the destruction of cultural heritage, the UNGA considers this issue of vital importance to bringing stability and security to the region and strongly urges all present states to address ISIS' actions and present their solutions to counter ISIS terrorism.

Discourse on the Issue

The significance of the discourse on protecting cultural heritage in Iraq and Syria from destruction due to ISIS, and preventing cultural looting, can not be understated. This is primarily because it regards the preservation of the rich cultural and historical legacy of these member

states. These not only represent their collective identity but also contribute to the world's cultural diversity. Violations related to the destruction and looting of cultural heritage sites are in direct conflict with the UN Charter, particularly in terms of Article 4, which prohibits the use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of any state. Actions such as these disrupt the peace and security of the region and undermine the principles of cooperation and mutual respect among nations, as outlined in the Charter (U.N. Charter art. 4, para. 1).

In a positive sense, there have been international efforts to combat cultural looting, mainly consisting of passing resolutions and overall combating terrorist organizations such as ISIS. These efforts have fostered global cooperation, promoting the shared goal of safeguarding cultural heritage and eliminating ISIS' terrorist activity. On the other hand, the loss of cultural artifacts and the damage to historical sites have deprived communities of their heritage, affecting their social cohesion and identity. Economically, this issue has had significant repercussions, as cultural tourism, a potential source of revenue, has been severely hampered by the destruction. Politically, it has strained diplomatic relations and complicated conflict resolution efforts in the region. Iran and Syria on several occasions have stated that neighboring countries could be doing more to aid the issue, resulting in tension between them.

The stakeholders most affected by this issue are the local communities in Iraq and Syria, who lose not only their cultural heritage but also economic opportunities related to tourism and cultural preservation. The international community, heritage organizations, and museums are also significantly impacted, as they bear the responsibility of ensuring the preservation and protection of these cultural treasures. Conversely, terrorist organizations and looters are the least affected, as their actions continue to disrupt and undermine global efforts to protect cultural heritage.

Past International Organization (IO) Actions & Latest Developments

Several (IOs) have engaged in addressing the issue of protecting cultural heritage in Iraq and Syria from ISIS destruction and preventing cultural looting. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has played a central role in these efforts, primarily through its emergency safeguarding of the Syrian Cultural Heritage project. UNESCO has worked to document and protect cultural sites, mobilize international support, and advocate for the safeguarding of these treasures.

The UN, particularly the UN Security Council, has also attempted to address the issue. In 2015, the UNSC unanimously passed Resolution 2199, which aimed to cut off funding for ISIS, including the trade in cultural artifacts. While this was a significant step, it has limitations in terms of enforcement and monitoring, as the illicit trade is often difficult to trace.

The issue continues to be of concern to the UN. UNESCO, along with the UN, is currently involved in preventative efforts regarding the trafficking of cultural artifacts from Iraq and Syria. Several discussions have been held by the UNSC and GA, as well as several resolutions passed, most prominently resolutions 2199 and 2347, condemning the destruction of cultural heritage in these regions. They have also sought to enhance coordination among member states to combat the illicit trade of cultural artifacts, but unfortunately, ISIS continues to loot and traffick.

The EU has also taken steps to combat cultural looting. In 2017, the EU adopted a regulation on the import of cultural goods to prevent illicit trafficking and ensure that cultural

artifacts entering the EU are properly documented and sourced.

Major countries involved in tackling this issue include the United States, France, and the United Kingdom, which have played key roles in providing financial and logistical support to protect cultural heritage in the region. Regional actors, such as Iraq and Syria, have been directly impacted and have sought international assistance in preserving their heritage. Furthermore, neighboring countries such as Turkiye, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iran have been impacted, as they serve as transit routes for trafficked artifacts prior to being sold on international markets.

The GA's mandate in GA-3: Social, Humanitarian & Cultural Issues, empowers it to address and take action on issues related to cultural heritage. This includes passing resolutions, mobilizing resources, and coordinating efforts to protect cultural heritage in regions affected by conflict. While progress has been made, there remains a need for ongoing vigilance and action to safeguard these invaluable cultural assets.

Questions that the Committee and Resolutions Should Address

1. How can member states collaborate to prevent the destruction and looting of cultural heritage, particularly focusing on measures that deter potential perpetrators?
2. How can the international community enhance coordination and cooperation to combat the illicit trade of cultural artifacts and promote the repatriation of stolen items?
3. What strategies can be adopted to support the preservation and restoration of

cultural heritage sites in conflict zones, and how can these efforts be sustained over the long term?

4. How can education and awareness campaigns be leveraged to instill a sense of cultural responsibility among local communities and discourage looting or destruction of their own cultural heritage? This will be useful in limiting and preventing further ISIS recruitment.
5. What legal and regulatory measures should be strengthened or implemented at the national and international levels to address the issue of cultural looting, and how can these measures be effectively enforced?

Suggestions for Further Research

- U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003
 - <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/iraq-war>
 - <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-64980565>
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_tcUogFo9yE
- ISIS timeline of formation
 - <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/timeline-the-rise-spread-and-fall-the-islamic-state>
 - <https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/islamic-state>
 - <https://assets.press.princeton.edu/chapters/i10673.pdf>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pzmO6RWy1v8>
- Cultural Aggression in war
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ae6MPLgcC5Y>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqdgj1aPHqs>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M26DXMpR3gs>
- Significance of historical, religious architecture in Iraq and Syria
 - <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/03/antiquities-looted-by-isis-end-up-in-london-shops>
 - https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/nimr_1/hd_nimr_1.htm
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3btW2VCRK7E>
- U.S. Department of Defense: The Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS
 - <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3266973/us->

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- <https://theglobalcoalition.org/en/>

Timeline of the Major Events

- **March 2003** - U.S. forces invade Iraq.
- **2004 -2007** - Remnants of Al Qaeda form their own militant group, led by Abu Musab al Zarqawi. Fades into obscurity as U.S. forces continue their surge into Iraq.
- **December 2011** - The Bush administration announced that U.S. troops would officially withdraw from Iraq
- **April 2013** - The Islamic State was officially founded, and its creation was announced by leader Abu Bakr al Baghdadi.
- **June 2014** - By this time, ISIS has claimed over half of Syrian territory and several major cities in Iraq. ISIS captures Iraq's industrial capital, Mosul.
- **February 2015** - ISIS militants destroyed statues in the Nineveh Museum, northern Iraq.
- **March 7, 2015** - ISIS militants destroyed ruins of Iraq's ancient city of Nimrud.
- **October 2019** - U.S. President Donald Trump announced that ISIS leader Abu Bakr al Baghdadi was killed.

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art. 4, para. 1.



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