



# AMUN Conference Preparation Newsletter

22–25 November 2025

10 September 2025

## Prepping for the Historical Commission of Inquiry

Greetings from the AMUN Secretariat. This update is geared towards students in our Historical Commission of Inquiry (COI) simulation.

We're thrilled about what's already shaping up to be another fantastic conference and we look forward to welcoming you this November!

### Commitment to Realism in the Commission

At AMUN, Commissions of Inquiry simulate two historical investigations established by the UN Security Council. These inquiries are addressed sequentially during the Conference by the same group of Commissioners. The order of topics is determined by the simulations staff and presented accordingly.

Each inquiry begins with a defined start date and a general overview of the dispute up to that point. While many facts are now known that were not available to participants at the time, the simulation prioritizes historical accuracy by using only information that would have reasonably been accessible to those involved. Events prior to the start date are considered static, though their significance may not have been fully understood by all parties. After the start date, the Commission's actions influence how events unfold, introducing contingency and divergence from historical outcomes—distinguishing the simulation from a purely academic research exercise.

The start date for the Commission of Inquiry on Darfur is **25 October 2004**.

The start date for the Commission of Experts to Review the Prosecution of Serious Violations of Human Rights in Timor-Leste (the then East Timor) in 1999 is **18 February 2005**.

Throughout the simulation, the Commission may:

- Submit periodic reports to the Security Council.
- Receive requests for additional information or focus areas.
- Hear testimony from Parties to the Dispute, regional inhabitants, non-governmental organizations, other UN bodies and Member States.

For each inquiry, the Commission elects a President and Vice President to facilitate its work. The inquiry concludes with a final written report submitted to the Security Council.

## Preparatory Statements

As a Commissioner, you are required to submit a preparatory statement before the Conference. This is not a traditional position paper, it serves a different purpose. Preparatory statements should:

- **Focus on inquiry, not advocacy.** Your role is investigative and mediating, not legislative or operational.
- **Develop lines of inquiry.** Use your statement to identify key questions, potential witnesses and areas of interest for the Commission.
- **Shape the simulation.** Your insights will help guide the Commission's direction and effectiveness.
- **Stand out through substance.** Strong preparatory statements may influence the selection of the Commission's President and Vice President.

Think of this as your opportunity to help set the agenda and tone for the Commission's work. Thoughtful preparation will make a real impact!

Learn more about [preparatory statements](#) in the [Introduction to the Historical Commission of Inquiry](#) chapter of the *AMUN Handbook*.

## Tips for Commissioners

As you prepare for your role as a Commissioner within the COI, we recommend the following practices:

- **Understand your role.** Your primary responsibility is to ask questions and make sense of complex, evolving situations. Find more information in the [COI chapter](#) of the *AMUN Handbook*.
- **Identify key actors.** Consider which organizations, countries, or individuals may be valuable for the Commission to question. The Commission may call Parties to the Dispute and [Home Government roleplayers](#) into the simulation.
- **Use topic guides wisely.** Start your research with the provided [topic guides](#), but don't limit yourself to only those materials. Do additional research in preparation for the conference.
- **Focus on pre-start date events.** Concentrate your research on events that occurred before the simulation's start date—these are static and form the foundation of your inquiry.
- **Think critically.** Analyze why events occurred and what led the Security Council and Secretary-General to establish the Commission.
- **Avoid recreating history and prepare to adapt.** This is a dynamic simulation. Use

your tools and judgment to fulfill the Commission's mandate rather than trying to replicate historical outcomes. The simulation will evolve based on your decisions, and historical events may unfold differently or not at all.

- **Plan for witness engagement.** The Commission decides who to call for testimony—choose witnesses who can provide meaningful insight. Not all witnesses may be forthcoming. The Commission's actions may influence their willingness to share information.
- **Build consensus.** Agreement among Commissioners is essential for effective reporting and decision-making. Disagreements may arise over what constitutes a "fact," but reports can still be adopted by consensus based on shared understandings. You will use interim and final reports to communicate the Commission's findings to the Security Council.
- **Be kind to yourself.** The topics addressed may be intense and sensitive. Take care of your mental and emotional well-being throughout the process.

## Questions, Comments or Concerns?

If you have any questions about this email, please reach out to us at [mail@amun.org](mailto:mail@amun.org)—we're happy to help!

If you are no longer the primary contact for your school's Model UN program, please send updated information to [mail@amun.org](mailto:mail@amun.org) or complete our [Change of Address/Contact](#) form.

Best of luck with your preparations,

Tessa Schutt  
Secretary-General

Alexandra Middlewood  
Executive Director

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