



AMUN Conference Preparation Newsletter

22–25 November 2025

10 September 2025

Prepping for the International Court of Justice

Greetings from the AMUN Secretariat. This update is geared towards students in our International Court of Justice (ICJ) simulation. It includes details relevant for Justices and Advocates.

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 Court

In keeping with AMUN's philosophy of simulating United Nations bodies as closely as possible, the AMUN ICJ closely resembles the ICJ in The Hague. The ICJ at AMUN is composed of fifteen student Justices who hear oral arguments from student Advocates, deliberate on the cases before them and collaboratively develop opinions of the Court. The student Advocates put forth their case by submitting a written memorial before the Conference and presenting oral arguments, where they state their case in person and respond to questions from the Justices.

Preparation Tips for Justices

As you prepare for your role as a Justice within the ICJ, we recommend the following practices to prepare for your role as AMUN:

- **Thoroughly review all sections of the [AMUN Handbook](#) that pertain to the ICJ prior to Conference.** These source materials are invaluable in gaining a firm understanding of the positions of each party and applicable international law. Additionally, you will have a very limited amount of time to deliberate with your fellow Justices and write an opinion. The greater understanding of the content you have when you arrive at AMUN, the easier these tasks will be to undertake.
- **Draft a case brief for each of the three cases to be heard before the Court.** A case brief is an outline of a case generally identifying the facts, issue, laws, and application of law. This practice will help deepen your understanding of the material as well as the ability to apply the relevant international law for each case. There are multiple ways to go about writing a case brief, and [this article by LexisNexis](#) can be helpful guidance on getting started.

- **Review this [Guide to the Basics of International Law](#) and this article on [International Law vs. National Law](#).** International law operates differently than the United States' common law system; thus, they should not be approached the same way. Gaining a deeper understanding of these differences and the foundations of international law will be pivotal in applying these laws to the facts of each case.
- **Independent research beyond the materials presented in the case is not only allowed—it's encouraged.** Justices are welcome to explore relevant legal principles and background information on their own to help inform their understanding and strengthen their reasoning. Thoughtful, well-supported opinions often benefit from this kind of deeper engagement.
- **Approach the simulation with an open mind and willingness to have difficult conversations.** Although you may arrive at AMUN with a preconceived view of how the case should be decided, we encourage you to remain open to the perspectives shared during oral arguments and the insights of your fellow Justices as you work toward the Court's final decision.
- **Don't be afraid to be original.** While this is a highly collaborative simulation, there may be times when your perspective stands alone. That's not only okay—it's valuable. If your interpretation or reasoning differs from others, you are encouraged to write your own opinion. Independent thinking is a vital part of the judicial process.

For a deeper dive into how to prepare as a Justice, read our *Accords* post, [International Court of Justice: Justice Preparation](#).

Preparation Tips for Advocates

As you prepare for your role as an Advocate of a case before the ICJ, we recommend the following practices to prepare for your role as AMUN:

- **Thoroughly review all sections of the [AMUN Handbook](#) that pertain to the ICJ prior to Conference.** These source materials are invaluable in gaining a firm understanding of the positions of each party and applicable international law. Additionally, you will have a very limited amount of time to present your argument to the Court. The greater understanding of the content you have when you arrive at AMUN, the easier this task will be to undertake.
- **Review [these tips](#) for how to prepare for and present an oral argument.** An oral argument is your only opportunity to verbally articulate your position to the Court, as well as answer any questions the Justices might have. Being well prepared for oral arguments is critical to your success.
- **Attend the Advocate meeting on the first night of Conference.** The AMUN Secretariat will provide critical updates, including the docket set by Justices, simulation changes and introductions to the Court's Registrars. The official time and location will be listed in the Conference program.

- **Take advantage of one-on-one support from the AMUN Secretariat at Conference.** AMUN is committed to providing equitable support to all participants across our robust simulations. To this end, we provide the opportunity to meet one-on-one with an ICJ Registrar at the Conference to review your oral arguments and answer any outstanding questions you may have. If you have questions prior to Conference, please email icj@amun.org for support.

For more information on how to prepare as an Advocate, read our *Accords* article, [*International Court of Justice: Advocate Preparation*](#).

Questions, Comments or Concerns?

If you have any questions about this email, please reach out to us at 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 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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