

Thistles and Thrones: The Fall of the Golden Horde



Background Guide

Letter from the Secretary-General and Director General

Hello delegates, advisors, parents, and teachers,

On behalf of us, your Secretary-General Isabella Balbi Masso and Director-General Alexandria Cerini, and all of our Secretariat, we would like to welcome you all to the 37th iteration of the Florida International Model United Nations Conference! This upcoming FIMUN will continue to be held at Florida International University's beautiful Modesto A. Maidique Campus from March 14th to 16th, 2025.

This year we have selected the theme of "Diplomacy in a Divided World," where delegates will be prompted to show diplomacy during challenging and engaging scenarios in a wide variety of General Assembly, Specialized, and Crisis Committees. Both of us originate from opposite sides of the ocean and have seen the division of the world, especially in our modern day. We are strong believers that every person, even young students, have the ability to show diplomacy and change the world. Being able to act with diplomacy in cases of adversity, disadvantage, and injustice is a skill that every person should learn and harness to make the world a better place, not just for themselves but for everyone.

We are working hard to provide every delegate with a committee that they will love, and an unforgettable experience where they will make new friends, learn new skills, and discover the amazing world of Model UN! This year we will be hosting 15 committees each one focusing on a different current, historical, or fantasy issue, with an amazing staff who are prepared to make this FIMUN the best one yet!

We are incredibly honored and excited to welcome you all to our amazing campus and conference this March, and cannot wait to see each and every one of you succeed!

See you soon,

Isabella Balbi Masso and Alexandria Cerini
Secretary-General and Director-General for FIMUN 37

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Letter from the Under-Secretary General

Dear Delegates,

My name is Kathy Cuellar and I will be your Under-Secretary-General for Crisis for this iteration of FIMUN 37! I am a senior at Florida International University double Majoring in Politics and International Relations, while working toward certificates in Latin American and Caribbean Studies and National Security Studies. Last year I had the honor of serving as the Director of Delegate Affairs for last year's FIMUN 36 and I am incredibly excited to be serving as your "USG" of Crisis for FIMUN 37! I was born and raised in Miami, Florida, making FIU a natural choice for me to attend and I have not regretted it since! I have been on the FIU Model UN team since Fall of 2023 and as a delegate, I have been able to not only learn new skills but also make new friends. I hope that you can have as much fun participating as we have had in planning these committees!

The FIMUN 37 team has worked extensively to create these exciting and unique committees curated toward delegate learning and enjoyment. As you look through these committees, you might notice that we try to put a little part of the world (and the multiverse) into different committees. This year's selection of the crisis committees starts in 1300 with the Fall of the Golden Horde in Eastern Europe, jumping to the 1530s with the Spanish (but the S is Silent): Court of Charles V, fast forwarding to 1975 to Bet(ting) on Green or Black with the National Security Council on the Angolan Civil War, reconvening with modern times to find where X Marks the Spot with Twitter Board of Directors in 2022, and then jumping into hyperspace to reach the planet of Dune with It's Getting Spicy In Here: The War for Arrakis. As for the ad hoc... well we can't tell you guys yet! All the topics have been selected to take you guys through a journey of problems, cooperation, and solutions to solve the crisis at hand! As we move closer to FIMUN 37, our secretariat, directors, chairs, and staffers are working hard to make this experience unforgettable and enjoyable! We're all excited to see how you guys plan on making your part and impact in "history!" As we move forward with FIMUN, please remember the importance of these events, as they may deal with sensitive topics and hold much importance (although some may be on the niche side). I am looking forward to seeing the chaos, shenanigans, and brilliance delegates will create in our FIMUN 37 crisis committees! If there are any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me, your crisis directors and chairs, or the secretariat of FIMUN 37.

~ Best of luck,

Kathy Cuellar

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Under-Secretary-General of Crisis Committees

Florida International Model United Nations 37

Letter from the Director

My name is Polina Evdokimova and it is my pleasure to welcome you all to the thirty-seventh iteration of FIMUN! I am glad to be the director of the “Thistles and Thrones: The Fall of the Golden Horde” committee. The thought to create a committee that would hit close to home, but still be a way to explore history has always been in the back of my mind, and now it is coming true!

A bit about myself - I am a junior at FIU. My major is Biochemistry with a Certificate in Human Rights and Political Transitions. I came to the US around 7 years ago, but I went back and forth between two countries spending a year or two in each. My interest in history started with Moscow State’s University historical arts group - “Золотые Леса” (Golden Forests), where I practiced Mounted Archery with a focus on Mongolian shooting and riding style. Here is where my passion for the era came in. After coming to the United States I joined a Debate team at my school and later - the FIU Model UN team, which has been one of the best choices in my life! With this wonderful team, I have traveled throughout the US and explored numerous topics and historical eras, looking at each from different perspectives of times and places.

This committee will address exactly that! “Diplomacy in a Divided World” - each of your characters possesses a unique outlook on how the world should be shaped as the Great Empire weakens. Some of you are descendants of great Khans and wish to see your country staying strong. Some of you are Knyaz s of independent city-states ruling with Jarlig and wishing nothing, but prosperity to your domain. Others of you, have never been conquered and will continue the fight for power over your own domain. Or perhaps, a newly emerged player in the field as Timurid’s empire grows and strengthens. Regardless, a wish for your people to prosper and peace to be over the land is what unites you all.

Your task is to navigate this complex field of interests without losing your power or your people. Diplomacy and wit are your strongest allies, as all of you will start with your own unique cards up your sleeves. Whether you are already a seasoned player or a beginner, I can promise one thing - this committee will be the most unique among all that you have encountered.

Good luck!
Polina Evdokimova
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Letter from the Chair

Dearest Delegates,

I'm honored to welcome you to the Crisis Committee on "Thistles and Thrones: The Fall of the Golden Horde," set in a pivotal moment in the 13th-14th centuries.

My name is Mariyam Temirbayeva, and I am excited to be serving as your Chair for this crisis committee at FIMUN 37. I am currently a junior at Florida International University, majoring in International Relations and pursuing a certificate in International Logistics. My journey with Model UN began during the spring semester of 2024, and I quickly fell in love with the experience. The thrill of debate, the complexity of the topics, and the sense of community were captivating. I am also one of the executive members of the Central Asian Student Association (CASA) at FIU, and I enjoy blending my academic interests with leadership roles.

Originally from Almaty, Kazakhstan, I have a special connection to this committee's topic, as the history of the Golden Horde is closely tied to my own country's past. As you dive into this committee, you'll need more than just a knowledge of complex names and historical facts. You must step into the shoes of khans, nobles, and diplomats of the Golden Horde—leaders who shaped the Eurasian landscape through battle, diplomacy, and strategic alliances. Whether you are defending your borders, forming alliances, or fighting an internal power struggle, you will be faced with the task of protecting your interests and using your influence wisely.

I am eager to witness your creative approach, strategic thinking and negotiating skills. This committee provides a fantastic opportunity to combine historical events with making important decisions. I encourage you to not only focus on your personal goals but also develop a sense of collaboration, community and innovation throughout the sessions.

I can't wait to see what you all bring to the table!

Best of Luck,

Mariyam Temirbayeva

Chair of "Thistles and Thrones: The Fall of the Golden Horde"

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Sensitivity Statement

FIMUN 37 has a zero tolerance policy on racism, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, and transphobia. If delegates are found to be engaging in any such actions or rhetoric are open to disqualification from awards.

We ask all delegates to be conscious of the histories and context of their countries or characters for their committees. Many of our committees focus on the stories and topics relating to historically oppressed and marginalized communities and regions. While these committees are simulations, the histories behind them are real, and disrespect towards the histories and existences of people represented in our committees will not be tolerated.

On our website, we have an anonymous report form if delegates encounter such actions. While we hope to avoid the need for such, this form will be checked regularly by our Secretariat to ensure that all delegates at FIMUN 37 can enjoy their weekend comfortably.

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that our university is located on the ancestral homelands of sovereign Native nations, including the Tequesta, the Calusa, and today, the Seminole Tribe of Florida, and the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida. We pay our respects to the traditional custodians, the Elders past and present, by fully recognizing Indigenous sovereignty as well as the historical and contemporary relationship between Indigenous peoples and their traditional homelands. It is within our responsibility as an academic institution to uphold knowledge about the history of our institution with the original stewards of this land that we live, learn, and work on. We encourage our delegates to read and learn about ways to support our local Indigenous communities in their efforts to preserve Seminole and Miccosukee land and water rights, cultural practices, and the conservation of the environment.

Consistent with our University's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, FIU is working towards creating an academic environment that is inclusive of Indigenous students, faculty, and staff who have often been rendered invisible due to structural discriminatory practices. At FIU, we hold ourselves accountable to serving local, regional and worldwide Indigenous communities through academic policy-oriented research, education, partnerships, community service, as well as enrollment initiatives to overcome the effects of Indigenous exclusion and erasure in our own academic institution. It is our hope that acknowledging the land helps us to better understand that harm has been done and address the legacies of violence in our communities in order to create a pathway to true healing

Rules of Procedure

Motions

Motion to Open/Resume Debate

Opens the floor for debate. Delegates may now begin to provide further motions.

Motion to Open Speakers List

Opens the Speakers List, wherein delegates can deliver speeches without a set topic.

Motion for a Moderated Caucus

Opens a set speakers list for debate on a specified topic. Total time and speaking time must be specified within the motion.

Motion for an Unmoderated Caucus

Opens time for unregulated working time for delegates to work within their blocs on working papers/draft resolutions/directives.

Motion for a Round Robin

Opens a Round Robin, where every delegate in the room delivers a speech for a set time without a designated topic. Will start from the delegate that motioned and will either go clockwise or counterclockwise at delegate's discretion.

Motion for a Gentlemen's Unmoderated/Consultation of the Whole

Similar rules as to a normal Unmoderated Caucus, however all delegates must remain in their seats.

Motion to Introduce Working Papers/Draft Resolutions/Directives

Opens the floor to begin formal procedure on papers. Order of address if not specified will default to order in which each paper was introduced.

Authors Panel

Generally motioned for alongside the introduction of Working Papers/Draft Resolutions. Involves a Reading Period for Delegates to read papers, an Introduction where a panel of Delegates present the paper, and a Question and Answer portion, where sponsors of the paper are asked questions by fellow delegates about the paper.

Motions for For and Against Speeches

Opens a short speakers list where (generally speaking) 2 delegates are called to speak for and against a given working paper/draft resolution/directive.

Motions to Enter Voting Procedure and Voting Methods

Goes alongside a motion to end debate when in General Assembly and certain Specialized Agencies. Delegates will vote on papers on the floor. If no voting method is specified, committee will default to placard vote.

Placard vote operates the same way as votes for procedural matters. Delegates raise their placards to vote For, Against, or to Abstain if they stated they were Present.

Roll Call vote will have the chair call Roll Call once more, and when delegates are called they will state whether they vote For, Against, or if they Abstain.

Votes by Acclimation involves calling for general consensus, where the paper will pass unless anyone votes Against. Then placard vote is in order.

Points

Point of Inquiry

General question regarding committee or the conference

Point of Order

Question or correction regarding parliamentary procedures

Point of Personal Privilege

Personal request unrelated to committee. (e.g temperature in the room or seating issue)

What is a Crisis Committee?

Crisis committees are dynamic committees that differ substantially from your typical General Assembly. You might be asking yourself, what exactly is this difference? The difference is that, unlike in General Assemblies, where everything is taking place in one setting (your committee room), there are “two rooms” in a crisis committee. One room, which is your committee room, is where you will be debating on recurring issues plaguing the committee and its “setting.” The other room consists of your crisis director and their staffers, where they are responding to the committee’s crisis notes and engendering crisis updates, which can either be delegate or staff driven. Delegates are welcome to prepare not only a public policy but also a composition of their own private interests to pursue through personal notes to the crisis staffers.

How do I begin to prepare for a crisis committee?

There are many ways you, the delegate, can prepare for a crisis committee. However, for the purpose of this guide, a standard that is generally widely used by delegates will be written here for your convenience. To start, reading your committee’s background guide written by your crisis directors will help you get a kickstart on your preparation efforts. The background guide, while it gives plenty of context to your topic, should not be the only research you bring to the conference. Rather, it should be giving you an idea as to how you would want to research for your committee. Not just for historical context, but also for your crisis arcs, speeches, and directives.

What is a Crisis Arc?

A crisis arc is the story that you are going to be writing to your crisis staff through crisis notes. Crisis arcs are the most integral aspect of your research and preparation for a crisis committee. They consist of every single idea that you plan on showcasing to your crisis staff through your crisis notes in order to influence your committee. When crafting a crisis arc, you should keep it secret from every other delegate in your committee, even if they ask! The best crisis arcs are typically the most creative and most detailed. As a result, these arcs will be the most likely to be brought to the committee’s attention by your crisis staff. Think of making a crisis arc like you’re writing a story or a movie script. This plan is top secret and will allow you to pursue personal interests and ulterior motives to impact your committee room.

What is a Crisis Note?

A crisis note is what you write to your crisis staff in order to influence action in your committee. Crisis notes should be written with some form of action. The better prepared your crisis arc is, the better your crisis notes will be in regards to the action(s) you want to take behind the scenes. Your crisis notes should be kept “secret” from other 2 delegates in your committee, unless you are collaborating with another delegate to influence action in the committee. The more detailed your crisis notes are, the more likely you are to get a crisis update from your crisis staff. Like the aforementioned crisis arc-story analogy, think of your crisis notes as the chapters to your story (crisis arc).

What is expected of the committee?

A crisis committee is very atypical in conflation with a General Assembly, but it is still a very fun experience that you will soon come to embrace! When you walk into committee, you are expected to be ready to debate on pressing issues and write crisis notes! Prior to the start of committee, the chair and crisis director will give you their specific expectations. The crisis director and their staff will walk into the committee to give the first crisis update. Afterwards, the crisis staff will return to the crisis room, and the chair will take a roll call, then will look for motions to, usually, discuss the crisis update in a moderated caucus, or your own unique motion! Once committee officially starts, you are expected to either be debating about finding a solution via a directive, or composing your top secret crisis note, which will be collected by your crisis staff.

What is a Crisis Room?

The crisis room is where your crisis staff will be for the majority of the conference. Unless it’s under a circumstance where someone from the crisis staff and or the crisis director wants/needs some clarification on a crisis note, delegates are not allowed to be in this room. In this room, the crisis staff will be responding to crisis notes. As these crisis notes are responded to, the crisis director will choose the best of the actions in the round of notes to incorporate into a crisis update

What is a Directive?

A directive is the resolution that you are deriving in response to the crisis update. Directives are basically General Assembly resolutions, except that they are much more 3 concise and to the point. In a moderated caucus, you are discussing the ideas that you have in your directive that you feel would be best to solve the problems given in the crisis update. When comprising the directive, feel free to give it a creative name! In an unmoderated caucus, you are meeting with the other delegates in your committee to merge these directives, especially if your fellow delegates had a similar idea to yours. Once these directives are merged, you would read through each and vote for them just as you would a General Assembly resolution. It is also worth noting that the best directives are usually incorporated in crisis updates by the crisis director.

Frontroom Procedures

Delegates must have a 50% majority vote to pass a motion unless it is a motion to suspend the rules; in that case, a supermajority is required. To pass directives, delegates must also have a 50% majority. The debate will primarily consist of round robins, moderated caucuses, and unmoderated caucuses, as well as voting periods when the need arises. Delegates will be expected to create directives in response to crisis updates, which will be given periodically throughout the weekend. Dais may specify a limit on the number of directives submitted, or other substantive restrictions (such as a sponsor minimum or a page cap).

Backroom Procedures

In regards to backroom procedures. Additionally, a new mechanic is being introduced to the two-notepad system. That third notepad will focus on the well-being of your region and the maintenance of your resources. Every delegate will have one resource available to them depending on the region in their power. (Ex. You rule over Novgorod, which is a land with vast forests. These forests have been a hunting ground for your people for centuries. Provisions will be available to you at all times, however, you must specify in the third notepad how you would get it). However, delegates must collect the other two through collaboration and diplomacy by the end of every session. (Moscow region is historically rich in refractory, low-melting, and refractory clays that were used for construction. You can arrange with the delegate representing the Knyaz of Moscow to exchange these resources through a JPD) JPDs and notes regarding the collection and maintenance of your region must be written and put in your third notepad. Failure to ensure resources for your region by the end of the session will result in “revolt” in your region and will limit your ability to use some of your power. Failure to collect all three resources, in two sessions in a row will result in front-room consequences (leaking of information, inability to use the army, etc.) Two notepads will be collected on a timed schedule several times per session. The third notepad will be collected once, after the end of every session.

If a crisis arc is not being advanced due to innumerable reasons including relevance or inappropriateness, the crisis staffer will respond in a way that guides the delegate in an alternative direction. Big enough issues will result in either the staffer breaking the “fourth wall” or the delegate being pulled aside. Staffers and the Director will be happy to explain why the arc was steered away from during feedback sessions. While crisis arcs typically do not always directly relate to what’s going on in the committee, we ask that there is some relevance to the topics discussed in the main room or there is an indication of arc progression depending on the resolutions passed or topics debated.

Some large and/or significant JPDs may even be included in crisis updates. For directives, in collaboration with the dais, the backroom staff has the authority to determine whether a directive actually solves the crisis at hand. We ask that for these documents - if responding to a crisis update - you address the issue at hand in the “first clauses and then go into your less relevant and arc-advancing ideas. If a directive does not solve the crisis at hand, it will be denied, and the situation established in the update will remain.

Additional Information

Additionally, to the information provided in the Background guide in regards to your character and region, each delegate will receive a card with their own personal knowledge of other delegates' characters, region's specifics, connections to the characters present in the committee, etc. It is highly encouraged to use this in the backroom and may be used in the front room as well.

Content Sensitivity

While we understand that the time setting of the committee is not a timid one, we highly discourage delegates from using extreme violence in their backroom and front room. Here are some, not all, possible sensitive topics that often surface in committees such as this one, including within this background guide. You should make an effort to be mindful of these while preparing your arc, speaking in committee, and writing your notes, directives, and JPDs:

- Gendered violence and discrimination
- Discrimination on the basis of race, class, religion sexual orientation, gender identity, or other factors of a person's identity
- Severe political violence, such as ethnic cleansing and/or genocide

Historical Accuracy

While we would like to stay historically accurate, we do not discourage delegates from taking creative freedom when working on their arc. Moreover, this time in history is called “БЫЛЛИНЫМ” (rooted in legends, in need to be believed in) not for its clarity and our deep knowledge and understanding, therefore a lot of information even to this time is a subject of debate. However, we would discourage delegates from a few things. First - using religious movements or political movements outside the region. You may create a new one, but it must be rooted in something that originates from the region at or before the time the committee is taking place. Second - technology, we encourage a creative approach to inventions in the arcs, but not too far, as it is the 13th century. In regards to other creative approaches - anything that may be relevant to history, beliefs, mythology, or traditions of the regions touched in this committee is permitted to be used.

Introduction to the Committee

In the 1360s, the Golden Horde entered a period of significant political instability known as the "Great Troubles." After the death of Khan Berdibek in 1359, a fierce struggle for power began, which led to the division of the Horde into many factions and temporary alliances. Victory is currently held by Mamai Han. But for how long remains a question, as support for Tokhtamysh is growing in the region and beyond it, with Tamerlan's army at his aid. However, the ambitions of the Timurid Empire are also growing, and for how long they will remain supporters of Tokhtamysh is unknown. At the same time, in the west, Moscow and other Ruthenia principalities were also experiencing a period of internal strife and external threats. Highly divided, by their political and diplomatic affiliations, they struggle to remain in power. During this period, there were numerous internecine strife, power struggles, and territorial conflicts that determined the political picture of the region. Ruthenia was divided into many principalities and republics, each of which sought to strengthen its independence and expand its territories.

Historical Background

Background: The rise of the Golden Horde in XXII-XXIII Centuries

The ascent of the Golden Horde in the 12th century began with the formation of steppe empires that preceded the creation of the Mongol Empire and the Ulug Ulus. This period was a time of political rivalry between various nomadic peoples, including the Naimans, Keraites, and Merkits. Turkic and Mongolian tribes gradually gained power, preparing for the conquests. One of the key aspects of this period was the formation of political alliances and the struggle for resources and territories, which later became the basis for the creation of nomadic empires.

One of the main actors of that time was Temuchin, who later became known as Genghis Khan. At the end of the 12th century, he began to unite the divided tribes, laying the foundation for the creation of a powerful empire, which later covered vast territories from China to Europe. Genghis Khan's rise was due to his outstanding political and military abilities, as well as his ability to attract allies to his side and use intratribal conflicts for his own gain. Temuchin was able not only to strengthen his influence within Mongolia but also to bring interaction with the peoples of Eurasia to a new level.

Another important figure of that time was Jochi, the eldest son of Genghis Khan. He played a significant role in the creation of the Jochi Ulus, which became the core of the Golden Horde. After the successful conquests of the Mongol armies led by Genghis Khan and his sons, Jochi received vast lands in the west, including the territories of modern Kazakhstan, Russia, and Eastern Europe. These lands became the basis for the formation of the Golden Horde, which later turned into a powerful empire that controlled trade routes and the political life of vast regions.

The transition from the 12th to the 13th century was marked by the expansion of the influence of the Mongol dynasty, the strengthening of military power, and the beginning of active conquests. The conquest of the Turkic tribes and the conquest of new territories under the leadership of Jochi and his descendants laid the foundation for the creation of one of the greatest empires of the Middle Ages – the Golden Horde. The Horde's political influence extended not only to the territory of modern Russia but also to the Middle East, Europe, and Central Asia, which made it an important player in international politics of that time.

At the beginning of the 13th century, Genghis Khan united the Mongol tribes and began his large-scale conquests. Around 1227, after the death of Genghis Khan, his sons and grandchildren continued their expansion. Although Jochi died before his father, his son Batu Khan continued his conquests, which eventually led to the creation of the Golden Horde, as we will know it at the start of the 14th century, which became the western part of the Mongol Empire.

By the middle of the 13th century, Batu Khan made a famous campaign against Russia and Eastern Europe, which ended with the conquest of significant territories. These conquests led to the establishment of the Mongol yoke in Russia and the system of Labels (Yarlik), which lasted for several centuries. Batu also founded the capital of the Golden Horde, the city of Sarai, which became an important stage in the development of the new state.

The Horde's Ulus system

The Golden Horde's ulus system was an administrative and territorial division of a vast empire into large possessions known as ulus. This system was introduced after the conquests of Genghis Khan and his descendants and was applied to the Jochi Ulus, which became the core of the Golden Horde. The ulus system was typical of the nomadic empires of that time, where each part of the empire was ruled by representatives of the ruling dynasty, usually the sons or closest relatives of the founder.

Each ulus was ruled by a Khan or Bek, who had considerable autonomy, but at the same time was obliged to obey the supreme authority of the main Khan. The Golden Horde's ulus system included several key territorial units, such as Ak Orda, Kok Orda, and Boz Orda. Ak Horde (Orda) was the central part, Kok Horde (Orda) was located in the east, and Boz Horde was in the west. These hordes represented not only geographical regions but also wings (right and left) of the empire's political and military structure.



The main uluses had their own armies, rulers, and a tax collection system, which allowed them to effectively manage their territories. However, the main decisions were made at Kurultai meetings, where the most important state issues were discussed. This structure allowed the Golden Horde to maintain control over vast territories, despite its nomadic nature and the vast distance between different parts of the empire.

The ulus system was an important part of the political stability of the Golden Horde, as it provided the autonomy needed to rule and manage vast regions. However, over time it became the cause of fragmentation and weakening of power, especially during the Great Troubles period. Various rulers of the ulus began to fight for autonomy, which eventually led to the collapse of the Golden Horde.

