

CASMUNC XVI 2026

SPECIALIZED AGENCY



# STOP, THIEF! INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR MUSEUM SECURITY

By Zoe Malca

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# LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

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Hi everyone!

I'm Zoe Malca, and I'm excited to be your chair! I'm a senior at Canterbury School and part of the Senior Secretariat, after serving on the Junior Secretariat last year. Outside of MUN, I'm passionate about environmental conservation and stay involved in Girl Scouts, BPA, HOSA, and Congreso. In my free time, I love watching old movies with friends and catching sunsets at the beach.

I hope this committee is both engaging and fun, and I can't wait to see the ideas you all bring. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out at [zoemalca14@gmail.com](mailto:zoemalca14@gmail.com).

Best,  
Zoe Malca  
Senior Secretariat, Canterbury Model  
United Nations



# COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

This is an advanced-intermediate committee, so delegates are expected to be familiar with parliamentary procedure and arrive well-prepared with research.

The committee will function as a hybrid between a General Assembly and a Crisis: debates will take place in the front room, with a few crisis updates each session and no backroom. Delegates will collaborate to write directives addressing these updates, with the ultimate goal of drafting and voting on a Resolution Paper written in directive style.

There is no use of tech during the committee. Bullying or inappropriate remarks of any kind will not be tolerated and may result in the delegate—and their school—being banned from future CASMUNC conferences.

**NOTE: Position Papers are not required for award eligibility, but submitting one will be looked favorably upon during scoring.**

# INTRODUCTION

## INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR MUSEUM SECURITY

The International Committee for Museum Security (ICOM Security, ICMS) is a specialized professional committee operating within the framework of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the world's leading organization dedicated to museum cooperation, ethics, and cultural heritage protection. Established by the 10th General Assembly of ICOM in June 1974 in Copenhagen, Denmark, ICMS was created in recognition of the growing threats facing museums worldwide and the need for a permanent, expert-led body focused exclusively on security and risk prevention. Over the past five decades, ICMS has played a central role in advancing international standards, professional practices, and collaborative responses related to the protection of museums, their staff, visitors, and collections.

ICMS functions in alignment with the Model Rules of ICOM (1991), which reaffirmed the committee's original and unchanging objectives. These objectives include supporting the aims of ICOM with specific regard to museum security; formulating and implementing programs related to cultural property protection; providing a forum for communication, cooperation, and information exchange among museum professionals and security specialists; advising ICOM on security-related matters; representing the interests of museum security professionals

and security specialists; advising ICOM on security-related matters; representing the interests of museum security professionals within the organization; and cooperating with ICOM National Committees and Affiliated Organizations on issues within its mandate. Through these functions, ICMS serves as both a technical authority and a coordinating hub, ensuring that security considerations remain integral to museum governance at the international level.

Museum security has become an increasingly complex and urgent concern as institutions face a convergence of natural disasters, armed conflict, terrorism, vandalism, cyber threats, and organized art crime. Recent incidents, including high-profile thefts in major museums such as the Louvre, underscore the persistent vulnerability of even the most well-resourced institutions. In October, jewelry from the Napoleonic era was stolen from the Louvre during a burglary carried out in broad daylight, prompting a formal investigation by the Paris Public Prosecutor's Office. This incident reflects a broader rise in thefts targeting objects made of precious metals across cultural and religious institutions, reigniting international debate over the adequacy of existing security measures and the shared responsibility of states, institutions, and professionals in safeguarding cultural heritage.

Within this context, ICMS emphasizes that museum security is a collective responsibility. Museums are ethically and professionally obligated to protect their collections and ensure their transmission to future generations. This responsibility is explicitly codified in the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums, in which the term "security" appears

eleven times. Article 1.7, dedicated specifically to security requirements, states that governing bodies must ensure appropriate measures to protect collections against theft or damage in exhibitions, storage areas, workspaces, and during transport. While museum management is responsible for implementation, competent public authorities are expected to provide sufficient financial, technical, and institutional resources to support these measures.

ICOM's commitment to museum security is further reflected in its engagement with international policy frameworks. In 2024, ICOM supported a specific reference within the Salvador de Bahia Declaration (G20 Culture, Brazil), which calls on states to further empower cultural institutions to play an active role in the protection of cultural heritage. This endorsement highlights the recognition that security cannot be achieved solely through institutional effort but requires sustained political will, legal enforcement, and international cooperation.

A defining feature of ICMS's work is its extensive network of institutional partnerships, which allow it to operate across disciplines and sectors. ICOM maintains formal relations with several key international organizations, including the International Council on Archives (ICA), the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), reflecting a shared commitment to safeguarding heritage across museums, archives, libraries, and historic sites. In addition, ICOM has established Memoranda of Understanding with organizations such as the International Alliance for the

Protection of Heritage (ALIPH), the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), and UNESCO, reinforcing its role within the broader international cultural governance system.

Operationally, ICMS works closely with emergency and response-oriented partners, including Cultural Emergency Response (CER) and the Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative (SCRI), particularly in contexts involving conflict, disaster recovery, and rapid-response capacity building. These collaborations enhance ICMS's ability to support museums facing immediate threats while also contributing to long-term resilience planning.

In the field of crime prevention, ICMS plays a vital role in supporting international efforts to combat the illicit trafficking of cultural property. Through ICOM's partnership with INTERPOL, and in alignment with the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, ICMS contributes technical expertise and professional guidance to law enforcement and museum professionals alike. The importance of specialized police units, such as France's Central Office for the Fight against Trafficking in Cultural Property (OCBC), demonstrates how national enforcement mechanisms can effectively complement international museum networks.

One of ICOM's most recognized tools in this effort is the ICOM Red Lists of Cultural Objects at Risk, developed in collaboration with museum experts, cultural institutions, and law enforcement agencies. These Red Lists identify

categories of objects most vulnerable to trafficking and are used globally by customs officials, police forces, auction houses, and museums to prevent illicit trade and facilitate restitution. ICMS supports the dissemination and application of these tools, reinforcing its role as a bridge between museums and the broader security community.

Finally, ICMS sustains its work through continuous education, training, research, and communication. Since 1996, the Museum Security Network has served as a primary platform for sharing information on cultural property protection, preservation, conservation, and security. Through working groups focused on physical security, technical systems, fire prevention, disaster preparedness, training, publications, and regulatory frameworks, ICMS monitors international developments and contributes to capacity-building initiatives worldwide. Its endorsement of initiatives such as SiLK: Guidelines for the Protection of Cultural Property, particularly aimed at supporting smaller museums without dedicated security specialists, reflects its commitment to accessibility and global equity in heritage protection.

Through its integration within ICOM, its partnerships with international organizations and law enforcement bodies, and its emphasis on ethical governance and professional expertise, the International Committee for Museum Security remains a cornerstone of global efforts to protect cultural heritage. Its work underscores the principle that every loss of a museum object represents not only a financial loss, but an irreplaceable erosion of shared human history, making museum security a critical national and international priority.

# TOPIC A: GLOBAL MUSEUM SECURITY & DISASTER PREPAREDNESS



Museum security has undergone significant transformation over the past several decades as institutions have responded to increasingly complex and interrelated threats. Historically, museum protection relied primarily on visible deterrents such as guards, locked display cases, and restricted access rooms. These measures were designed to prevent opportunistic theft rather than coordinated attacks or large-scale disasters. As collections expanded and museums became more publicly accessible, these traditional approaches proved insufficient to address risks such as fire, structural failure, environmental damage, and organized theft.

Advancements in museum security have since expanded into integrated protection systems, combining physical, technical, and procedural measures. Modern museums increasingly employ layered security designs that include controlled entry points, reinforced architectural layouts, motion detection, alarm systems, climate controls, and digital monitoring. Disaster preparedness has similarly evolved, with institutions adopting emergency response plans, collection evacuation protocols, and environmental monitoring to mitigate damage from floods, earthquakes, fires, and extreme weather events. Climate change has accelerated this shift, as rising sea levels, wildfires, and severe storms pose direct physical threats to museums housed in historic or coastal buildings not designed for modern environmental stressors.

Despite these advancements, tensions persist regarding how security standards should be applied globally. Many high-

# TOPIC A: GLOBAL MUSEUM SECURITY & DISASTER PREPAREDNESS



profile museums have access to advanced technologies and specialized personnel, while smaller or regional institutions often lack funding, technical expertise, or infrastructure to implement comparable measures. This disparity has created an uneven global security landscape, where preparedness depends heavily on geographic location and economic capacity. Additional tensions arise between security and accessibility: increased surveillance, restricted movement, and hardened architecture can conflict with museums' educational missions and ethical commitments to openness. The challenge of balancing physical protection with public access, equity among institutions, and long-term resilience remains a central issue in contemporary museum security discourse.

Fort Myers, Florida

MCMXIV  
Founded in 1964

# TOPIC B: ILLICIT TRADE NETWORKS & CULTURAL PROPERTY OWNERSHIP



The theft of cultural property from museums has long been connected to broader illicit trade networks that extend far beyond individual criminal acts. In the past, large-scale looting often occurred during armed conflict or colonial expansion, with objects removed en masse and dispersed into foreign collections. Many of these objects remain outside their countries of origin, forming the basis of ongoing restitution and repatriation disputes. Over time, these historical patterns laid the groundwork for modern trafficking networks that exploit legal ambiguities and global demand for rare cultural objects. Today, illicit cultural property trade is driven by organized transnational networks that include thieves, intermediaries, smugglers, document forgers, corrupt officials, and buyers. These networks often operate alongside other forms of organized crime, using similar routes and financial mechanisms. Stolen objects may be concealed, altered, or deliberately misidentified before entering legal markets through falsified provenance records. Museums are frequently targeted for objects made of precious metals, religious significance, or portable antiquities, which can be melted down, dismantled, or quietly absorbed into private collections. The profits generated by these networks can be substantial, while the risk of prosecution remains comparatively low, making cultural property crime an attractive enterprise.

International legal frameworks attempt to address these issues but remain contested in practice. The 1970 UNESCO Convention establishes that cultural property illicitly exported

# TOPIC B: ILLICIT TRADE NETWORKS & CULTURAL PROPERTY OWNERSHIP



after its entry into force should be returned to its country of origin, affirming state ownership over nationally significant heritage. However, the convention does not apply retroactively, leaving many historically displaced objects in legal limbo. Additional frameworks, such as the UNIDROIT Convention (1995), emphasize due diligence and good faith acquisition, placing greater responsibility on buyers and institutions. Despite these instruments, debates persist over which objects belong to specific nations, which are considered part of shared human heritage, and which lack clear ownership due to incomplete documentation. These unresolved questions, combined with market demand and weak enforcement, continue to fuel illicit trade and complicate museum efforts to protect and recover stolen cultural property.

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# **Guiding Questions — Topic A**

- 1. To what extent should international museum security standards be universal, and where should flexibility be preserved to account for differences in funding, geography, and institutional capacity?**
- 2. How have advancements in security technology and disaster-preparedness planning changed the physical protection of museums, and what limitations remain despite these developments?**
- 3. To what degree do climate-related threats such as flooding, wildfires, and extreme weather challenge existing museum security frameworks, particularly for historic and coastal institutions?**
- 4. How can museums balance the need for heightened physical and technical security with their ethical responsibility to remain open, accessible, and educational public spaces?**
- 5. To what extent does unequal access to resources among museums contribute to global disparities in preparedness, and how might this affect the protection of lesser-known collections?**
- 6. How should responsibility for museum security be distributed among museum leadership, national governments, and international organizations during periods of crisis or disaster?**

# **Guiding Questions — Topic B**

- 1. How have transnational criminal networks adapted their methods over time to exploit gaps in museum security, provenance documentation, and international enforcement?**
- 2. To what extent do existing international legal frameworks effectively address museum theft and illicit trafficking, and where do limitations in enforcement or jurisdiction persist?**
- 3. How should disputes over cultural property ownership be approached when legal claims, ethical considerations, and historical context conflict?**
- 4. To what degree does demand within the global art market contribute to the persistence of illicit cultural property trade, and how does this affect museum security?**
- 5. How do economic incentives and relatively low prosecution rates shape the behavior of individuals and networks involved in cultural property theft?**
- 6. To what extent should cultural objects be regarded as national heritage versus shared human heritage, and how does this distinction influence prevention, restitution, and repatriation efforts?**

# POSITIONS

## **Tsirogiannis Christos – Forensic Archaeologist, Trafficked Antiquities Databases**

Tsirogiannis Christos is a forensic archaeologist known for identifying trafficked antiquities by cross-referencing museum and market objects with photographic archives seized from known traffickers. His work has directly led to the recovery and repatriation of numerous looted artifacts from museums, auction houses, and private collections. He specializes in reconstructing illicit supply chains and exposing falsified provenance documentation. Tsirogiannis values evidentiary rigor, emphasizing that scientific analysis is essential to dismantling trafficking networks rather than relying solely on market self-regulation.

## **Anne Laure Bandle – Cultural Property Law Specialist**

Anne Laure Bandle is a legal expert specializing in cultural property disputes, with a focus on theft, restitution, and due diligence obligations. Her work examines how private international law intersects with museum acquisitions and cross-border recovery efforts. She is particularly concerned with gaps between legal ownership and ethical responsibility. Bandle advocates for stronger accountability mechanisms within the art market and clearer legal standards for museums handling contested objects.

## **Thomas R. Kline – Legal Advisor on Art Theft and Recovery**

Thomas R. Kline is an attorney specializing in art theft, recovery litigation, and cultural property disputes involving museums and collectors. He advises institutions on navigating restitution claims, ownership conflicts, and international legal frameworks governing stolen art. Kline frequently operates at the intersection of law enforcement, museums, and private stakeholders. His approach prioritizes negotiated resolution and legal clarity while recognizing the reputational and ethical risks institutions face.

**Zeynep Boz – Head of Department for Combating Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Türkiye)**

Zeynep Boz oversees Türkiye's national efforts to prevent, investigate, and respond to the illicit trafficking of cultural property. Her department coordinates with law enforcement, customs authorities, and international partners to recover trafficked artifacts and prevent illegal export. She plays a key role in restitution claims involving objects removed from Türkiye. Boz emphasizes state responsibility and preventive documentation as core tools in combating cultural property crime.

**Douglas Owsley – Risk Mitigation Advisor for Museum Data Systems (Smithsonian-linked)**

Douglas Owsley serves as an advisor on risk mitigation strategies related to museum data systems, including digital collections records and institutional databases. His work focuses on preventing data loss, cyber intrusion, and system failures that can compromise collection security and provenance tracking. He brings scientific expertise from his career at the Smithsonian Institution.

**Corine Wegener – Senior Cultural Heritage Specialist (Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative)**

Corine Wegener specializes in emergency response for cultural institutions affected by armed conflict, natural disasters, and humanitarian crises. She coordinates rapid-response missions and training programs that help museums protect collections under extreme conditions. Wegener's work bridges museum practice and international humanitarian response.

**Aruna Francesca Maria – Programme Manager, First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis (ICCROM)**

Aruna Francesca Maria leads ICCROM's flagship program focused on emergency protection and recovery of cultural heritage during crises. Her work includes training professionals worldwide in damage assessment, stabilization, and risk preparedness.

## **Emma Cunliffe – Cultural Heritage Damage Assessment Specialist**

Emma Cunliffe specializes in field-based assessment of damage to cultural heritage caused by conflict, disasters, and environmental degradation. She develops methodologies to document loss and inform recovery strategies for museums and heritage sites. Her work often feeds into international reporting and protection efforts. Cunliffe uses data to support long-term protection planning.

## **Peter Herdrich – Emergency Response Coordinator (Cultural Emergency Response, CER)**

Peter Herdrich coordinates emergency responses for cultural institutions facing sudden threats such as floods, fires, or conflict-related damage. He works directly with museums to implement immediate stabilization measures and longer-term recovery plans. Herdrich emphasizes practical solutions tailored to local conditions. His approach centers on coordination with local authorities and minimizing irreversible loss.

## **Suzanne Keene – Collections Security and Risk Management Specialist**

Suzanne Keene is a leading expert in museum collections security, storage systems, and risk management planning. Her research focuses on identifying vulnerabilities in museum operations and developing practical frameworks for mitigating risk. She has advised institutions on balancing access with protection. Keene values systematic assessment, staff training, and embedding security into everyday museum practice.

## **Jonathan Ashley-Smith – Preventive Conservation and Risk Assessment Researcher**

Jonathan Ashley-Smith is a researcher known for advancing preventive conservation and risk-based approaches to collections care. He emphasizes anticipating threats rather than reacting to damage. He has contributed to methodologies that assess likelihood /impact of risks across different museum environments.

### **Stefan Michalski – Collection Risk Modeling Specialist**

Stefan Michalski specializes in quantitative risk modeling for museums, particularly related to fire, flooding, and environmental hazards. He has developed tools that help institutions prioritize security investments based on measurable risk. His work translates scientific analysis into practical planning frameworks.

### **Robert Waller – Developer of Collection Risk Assessment Frameworks (CPRAM)**

Robert Waller developed the Cultural Property Risk Analysis Model (CPRAM), widely used to assess and compare risks to museum collections. His framework allows institutions to evaluate threats systematically and allocate resources strategically. Waller's work bridges theory and application in museum risk management.

### **Eric Doehne – Environmental and Materials Risk Specialist**

Eric Doehne focuses on how environmental and chemical factors threaten cultural materials and museum structures. His work examines deterioration caused by pollution, moisture, and material instability. He provides scientific insight into long-term preservation challenges. Doehne values preventive intervention and interdisciplinary collaboration between scientists and museum professionals.

### **Gaël de Guichen – Senior Advisor on Risk Prevention (ICCROM)**

Gaël de Guichen is a senior advisor specializing in physical and environmental risk prevention for cultural institutions. He has played a key role in shaping international approaches to preventive conservation and disaster preparedness. His work emphasizes early intervention and institutional responsibility. De Guichen values long-term planning and global knowledge exchange.

## **Barbara Roberts – Museum Fire Prevention and Collections Safety Consultant**

Barbara Roberts specializes in fire prevention strategies tailored to museums and heritage buildings. She advises institutions on fire detection, suppression systems, and emergency evacuation planning. Her work addresses one of the most common and destructive physical threats to collections. Roberts values preparedness, staff training, and integration of fire safety into overall security planning.

## **Bogdan Despescu – Director, Organized and Emerging Crime Directorate (INTERPOL)**

Bogdan Despescu oversees INTERPOL's work on organized crime, including cultural heritage trafficking. His directorate coordinates intelligence sharing and operational support across member states. He plays a strategic role in addressing transnational criminal networks that target museums. Despescu values international cooperation, intelligence-led policing, and coordinated enforcement.

## **Vincent Michel – Senior Investigator, OCBC (France)**

Vincent Michel is a senior investigator with France's Central Office for Combating Trafficking in Cultural Property. He works directly on cases involving museum theft, illegal excavation, and cross-border trafficking. His investigations often involve coordination with museums and international partners. Michel values meticulous investigation, evidence preservation, and recovery of stolen objects.

## **Arthur Brand – Art Crime Investigator and Recovery Specialist**

Arthur Brand is an independent art crime investigator known for recovering high-profile stolen artworks. He works closely with law enforcement, museums, and private owners to locate and return stolen objects. Brand focuses on negotiation, intelligence gathering, and understanding criminal behavior. He values recovery over punishment and emphasizes restoring cultural objects to public access.

### **Chris Marinello – Founder and CEO, Art Recovery International**

Chris Marinello leads an organization specializing in the recovery of stolen and looted art. He represents museums, governments, and private owners in complex recovery cases. Marinello often operates where legal enforcement alone is insufficient. He values negotiation, ethical resolution, and practical outcomes over prolonged litigation.

### **Julian Radcliffe – Chairman, Art Loss Register**

Julian Radcliffe oversees the world's largest private database of stolen art and antiquities. His work supports museums, law enforcement, and insurers in identifying and recovering stolen objects. The Art Loss Register plays a central role in due diligence and market transparency. Radcliffe values information sharing and prevention through documentation.

### **Thomas G. Tullin – Advisor, Museum Theft Investigations (Former FBI Art Crime Team)**

Thomas G. Tullin is a former FBI Art Crime Team special agent who now advises on museum theft cases. He brings investigative experience in recovering stolen cultural property and coordinating with international partners. His perspective emphasizes law enforcement realities and procedural integrity. Tullin values prevention through intelligence and collaboration.

### **Remigiusz Plath – Secretary, International Committee for Museum Security (ICMS), ICOM**

Remigiusz Plath manages the administrative and strategic coordination of ICMS within ICOM. He supports information exchange, professional collaboration, and policy alignment on museum security issues. His role connects technical expertise with institutional governance. Plath values coordination, consistency, and professional standards.

**Christian Kragelund Sjøberg – Communication and Public Relations Section Manager (ICOM)**

Christian Kragelund Sjøberg oversees communication strategies related to ICOM's work, including museum security initiatives. He manages how information, alerts, and policy positions are shared with the global museum community. His work shapes awareness and professional engagement. Sjøberg values transparency and timely communication.

**Sophie Delepierre – Head of Heritage Protection (ICOM)**

Sophie Delepierre leads ICOM's efforts to address threats to cultural heritage, including theft and trafficking. She coordinates initiatives that support museums in prevention and response. Her role bridges policy, ethics, and operational support. Delepierre values international cooperation and preventive action.

**Jean-Michel Tobelem – Museum Management and Security Risk Consultant (ICOM-affiliated)**

Jean-Michel Tobelem advises museums on governance, risk management, and institutional resilience. His work focuses on aligning security practices with organizational strategy and sustainability. He emphasizes that security is a management issue, not solely a technical one.

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