

# SSUNS 2019 CRISIS GUIDE

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### Introduction

A crisis committee is a spin on the traditional Model UN experience. Crisis committees are distinguished by their relatively small size and dynamic structure. They allow for delegates to interact with the world being simulated around them. Delegates are encouraged to balance cooperation and individual pursuits. Crisis committees follow similar rules of procedure regarding debate but differ drastically from General Assemblies and Specialized Agencies in terms of what delegates are personally capable of doing. This guide will give a brief overview of how crisis committees function and how to personally succeed in such committees.

### Structure of Crisis Committees

Crisis committees are smaller than typical Model UN conferences, containing 15-30 delegates. In a crisis committee, delegates are representing characters instead of countries. These characters can be real or fictional persons. Some committees have a mix of both real and fictional characters. The background guide provided to delegates is intended to provide general context of the committee, whereas the topics of debate will arise in an ad hoc manner through crisis updates. These updates are presented by the crisis staff: a small group of McGill students whom are responsible for simulating the world behind the crisis committee. The updates they present will provide delegates with a pressing issue that requires immediate action through the passing of a directive (see example below).

A directive is similar to a resolution; however, it is much shorter and only lists operative clauses (specifically what the directive wants to do). Delegates may work in groups or separately on their directives. A crisis committee will often have multiple proposed directives, of which delegates must debate and vote on. Multiple directives can be passed to address a single issue. When a directive is passed, it is considered the policy that the committee undertakes. The crisis staff then work to incorporate this action into the world being simulated. Updates come often enough that there is always something for delegates to debate. Crisis updates thus serve two purposes: to present a new issue to the committee and to inform the committee of the results of the various directives passed. In between crisis updates, delegates usually debate the issues through moderated or unmoderated caucuses. These are the same debate frameworks as found in a typical Model UN committee.

### Personal Crisis Notes

The most distinct factor of crisis committees is how they permit delegates to influence the world around them without the consensus of the committee. Delegates are playing the role of the character assigned, and this character has a personal agenda aside from group aspirations (the delegate has free reign to determine what this agenda is). For example, a delegate in Ortega's Council may want to create her own private militia without the consent of the committee. She would go about doing this through a personal crisis note.

Personal crisis notes are written by delegates at any time during the committee session, usually on a regular size sheet of paper. They are most commonly formatted as a letter: the delegate addresses an individual (this can be a family member or a friend - there are no strict rules here,

so get creative) and explains specific actions that she would like carried out. Specifying the goal of the action within the crisis note is important. For example, if the aforementioned delegate in Ortega's Council orders their brother to purchase the services of a militia through a crisis note, they could specify that they intend to overthrow Daniel Ortega. This gives more context to the proposed action and helps the crisis staff better understand the delegate's intention. The delegate then gives it to a crisis staffer whom is collecting notes. The crisis staff (located in a different room) then considers the note and writes a response. This may affirm that the action will be carried out or it may ask for further details. Delegates are then given back their notes and respond accordingly - this may mean writing the next step of their overall plan or adding detail to their rejected note. This is a dynamic process that continues throughout all committee sessions.

## **Tips for Success in Crisis Committees**

**Preparation:** To prepare successfully for a crisis committee, one should do two specific things. First, delegates should familiarize themselves with the context of the committee. This means historical and cultural background, other characters in the committee, relevant geographical locations, and technology available. Second, delegates should come to the committee with goals that they want to achieve. The use of personal crisis notes gives delegates unlimited opportunities. The more creative the delegate's ideas, the more successful they will be!

**In Debate:** The most successful debater in a crisis committee will be a leader and a fast-thinker. In regards to leadership, the successful delegate is able to rally the committee in times of stress; she is a persuasive consensus builder. They should also be fast-thinking: the topic of debate changes often in crisis committees, and the successful delegate needs to be able to come up with solutions quickly. The most competitive delegates will start to write the directive as the crisis update is being presented.

**Crisis Notes:** Personal crisis notes are the biggest learning curve for new delegates, but the route to success is not complicated: think big. It is more important to try something creative than to meander over small, unexciting ideas. Sending crisis notes that influence the world around the committee in a direct and significant way are a great way for delegates to increase their clout in the committee. There is a relationship between success in personal crisis notes and debate: if a delegate is the one creating the crisis updates, they will be most prepared to debate the events. A tip for pursuing large scale upheaval is to work with other delegates in what are called joint crisis notes. This involves pooling resources in pursuit of a common goal among 2-3 delegates. Mechanically, this is done by writing a crisis note as per usual, except all involved delegates sign off on the note before sending it.

## **Conclusion**

If you still have questions after reading this, feel free to reach out to [crises@ssuns.org](mailto:crises@ssuns.org) for any clarification. Crises may appear confusing, but delegates often learn the ropes very quickly. Remember to have fun, and good luck!

## Example Directive

Directive: Fix the Flood

- 1) Send 1,000 men from the Sandinista Liberation Army to assist emergency services in Managua in dealing with the current floods.
- 2) Allocate a further C\$2 million to the Natural Disaster Reserve in order to address issues of funding.
- 3) Ortega's Council will be moved to León until the chaos in the capital dies down.

## Example Personal Crisis Note

To my dearest brother Esteban,

How are you? It has been since before the revolution that we have been able to fully catch up. I have recently been initiated on Ortega's Council, but I do not agree with his socialist economics. I would personally like to see a capitalist, democratic Nicaragua. Here is the first steps in achieving this:

- 1) Take C\$100,000 from my personal bank account.
- 2) Assume the identity of a rural peasant. Please wear garb that covers you face - I do not want anyone to identify you during this mission.
- 3) Purchase a mule and rifle, and in the dead of night, cross the Honduran border.
- 4) Locate the nearest band of mercenaries and begin negotiations on acquiring their services for use in Nicaragua.
- 5) Contact me before you make a deal so I can confirm the costs.

Please get this done as soon as possible - I can't stand being among these socialists!

Good luck,

Your brother Sergio Ramirez