



Yakuza

Introductions from your Yakuza Dais

Dear delegates,

My name is Ahmed Sultan, and along with being one of the Directors-General for StuyMUNC this year, I am also one of the chairs of this committee! I am a junior at Stuyvesant, and have been doing Model UN since the seventh grade—since then, I've gone to many conferences in the city and around the country. In addition, this year, I helped create our very first training conference, miniMUNC, which offered students from both Stuyvesant and around the city a chance to practice Model UN and learn valuable skills at workshops in a relaxed environment this past October.

However, Model UN isn't the only thing I do—I'm on the Congressional Debate team, an editor for our school's newspaper, the Stuyvesant Spectator, and I'm a director of our school's hackathon, StuyHacks. Even with my other commitments, MUN has always been my number one activity, and something I've truly become passionate about.

I urge you all to read through the entire background guide, and do as much research as you can, for this topic is extremely complex and the history of Japan's yakuza goes back for centuries. In addition, we'll be disclosing how committee works and provide some starter tips for your preparation. I know Sydney and I, along with our staff, are super stoked for this committee, and I look forward to seeing you all in April!

Best,
Ahmed Sultan
asultanoo@stuy.edu

Dear delegates,

My name is Sydney Dao and I am super excited to be one of your chairs for this committee! While I (sadly) didn't get very involved with Model UN until my sophomore year, it has quickly grown to become a huge part of my life. As a current junior, I'm now one of the Directors of Logistics for this year's conference. Aside from Model UN, I also volunteer with ARISTA and am a member of our Key Club's Fundraising Committee. Outside of school, I'm part of a weekly writing workshop and help teach a fashion design and art class at the community center nearby.

While my interests may be broad, I find that collaboration is one common aspect between the various activities I take part in, which is why I can't wait to see you all work together and debate during committee—I hope that by preparing thoroughly, you can get just as excited for this conference as we are!

Sincerely,
Sydney Dao
sdaoooo@stuy.edu

Committee Information

This committee will be held in typical crisis manner - the flow of committee will be a perpetual moderated caucus with crisis events occurring at random points throughout committee. Delegates are encouraged to utilize their powers granted by their positions in committee through the usage of personal crisis notes, directives, communiques and press releases. In addition, we'd like to emphasize the importance of creativity and fast thinking when responding to crises during committee.

For all intents and purposes, assume the person you are representing is alive, a current member of their designated clan, and not imprisoned. If you have difficulties researching your specific position, we suggest you look at the clan your person is a member of, as clan alliances and enemies largely remain the same for all members of a clan. For example, if your position is a member of the Yamaguchi-gumi organization, but you cannot find any specific information on your position, use information about the Yamaguchi-gumi as the basis of your research. Best of luck, delegates! We look forward to seeing the culmination of your research in April.

Position papers are not required. However, if you'd like to send us your position paper, please do so by **Friday, March 29th, 2019**. We cannot guarantee we will be able to look at papers beyond the 29th. Please also bring a physical copy, and any papers can be sent to asultanoo@stuy.edu or sdaooo@stuy.edu.

Committee Description

Yakuza—an overview

The term “yakuza”—a Japanese word meaning “good for nothing”—can refer to both individual Japanese gangsters or the larger clans and organizations they are a part of. Historically, the yakuza have always been considered outcasts. Modern day yakuza organizations are typically believed to have descended from bands of masterless samurai (*ronin*), along with gamblers and petty criminals from Japan’s feudal period. Today, the yakuza engage in illegal activities like “extortion, blackmail, smuggling, prostitution, drug trafficking, gambling, [and] loan sharking” (Encyclopedia Britannica), which help them fund the legal activities they deal with as well. They also control various businesses in major Japanese cities and around the world, ranging from taxi fleets and construction companies to restaurants, bars, and factories, along with other businesses.

The relationship between the yakuza and the Japanese police, government, and people is an extremely gray and complicated area, consisting of many loopholes and strange arrangements made between all parties to coexist with one another. Membership to one of Japan’s many yakuza clans is not illegal. Yakuza-owned businesses, like those described in the previous paragraph, are often clearly presented with some relationship to a yakuza clan.

The yakuza publicly portray themselves as *ninkyo dantai*, or chivalrous organizations, despite their various criminal activities. In the past, yakuza members and organizations have been responsible for forming security forces for foreign dignitaries, and in multiple natural disaster situations—such as the 1995 Kobe earthquake or the Tohoku earthquake, tsunami and Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster in 2011—the yakuza were there to donate and deliver food, water, money and supplies to aid the people affected by the disasters, and help rebuild what had been destroyed. Some Japanese citizens view the existence of yakuza as a necessary evil, as they believe that organized crime, like that of the yakuza, deters various street individuals from committing such heinous acts.

Modern-day Yakuza

The role and actions of the yakuza have slowly begun to change as the Japanese government's restrictions grow and large yakuza alliances break apart. Starting in 2010, there has been a huge increase in laws that target the yakuza. While previous legislation has been aimed at controlling and managing these organizations, the new laws focus more on dismantling them—or at the very least, forcing the yakuza to go underground. Yakuza exclusion ordinances, such as those that made it illegal for businesses to pay them protection fees, are making it harder for the yakuza to profit. As a result, they focus more on their lucrative illegal activities; this then leads to further limitations set in place by the government which starts the cycle again.

Another effort from the Japanese government to decrease the presence of yakuza is by making it easier for yakuza members to quit their organizations and become normal citizens again. In places such as Fukuoka, financial aid is being provided to those who leave the yakuza and officially register with government officials as having done so. This monetary help is meant to keep ex-yakuza from returning to a life of crime and increasing amounts of people are taking advantage of this, while those who stay behind aren't pleased—the yakuza has never looked fondly upon those who leave them and are especially upset at this plan due to their already dwindling numbers.

However, the yakuza aren't just facing external pressure to change; they're also going through plenty of internal conflict and turmoil. In 2015, the Yamaguchi-gumi, which is currently the largest yakuza group in Japan, began to break apart. Members split away to create the Kobe Yamaguchi-gumi due to problems they had with the Yamaguchi-gumi's leadership. In 2017, there was another split. Members from the Kobe Yamaguchi-gumi broke off to form the Ninkyo Yamaguchi-gumi, bringing members from both the original Yamaguchi-gumi and other clans as well. This time, the split was due to differences in beliefs about the purpose of the yakuza and how they should conduct business. The division of the Yamaguchi-gumi led to worries about power struggles and intense conflict, but the increased precautions put in place by the police kept the yakuza wary enough to prevent any large problems.

Spot Descriptions

Shinobu Tsukasa, known as Kenichi Shinoda by the United States government, is the *kumicho*, or, leader of the Yamaguchi-gumi. The clan has a wide-reach across the country and has begun to expand their control even more under his leadership. However, they have also been placed under sanctions by the United States, a step by the US government to curb their power.

Shigeo Nishiguchi is one of the leaders of the Sumiyoshi-kai, which is the second largest yakuza group in Japan. Nishiguchi is not the sole leader of this group because the Sumiyoshi-kai is not a single clan but rather, a league of smaller clans.

Kakuji Inagawa is the founder of the Inagawa-kai, the third largest clan in Japan. Inagawa is highly respected, even among other yakuza groups, and has often acted as a peace broker for them.

Kazuki "Orochi" Tanaka is the leader of the Aizukotetsu-kai, another league of yakuza groups. The Aizukotetsu-kai is the fourth largest yakuza group in Japan.

Kunio Inoue is the founder and leader of the Kobe Yamaguchi-gumi, which he formed in 2015 when he broke away from the Yamaguchi-gumi.

Jirō Kiyota is the current leader of the Inagawa-kai. Under his leadership, the group has become one associated by the public with humanitarian projects. However, he has also been placed under sanctions by the US government.

Kiyoshi Takayama is the leader of the Kodo-kai, a branch of the Yamaguchi-gumi. He is also the *wakagashira*, or, second-in-command, of the Yamaguchi-gumi.

Atsumu Moriya is the current leader of the Kyosei-kai, which is based in Hiroshima. The Kyosei-kai is rivals with the Yamaguchi-gumi and frequently has conflicts with it and other clans.

Hareaki Fukuda is the deputy leader and chairman of the Sumiyoshi-kai.

Yoshinori Oda is the founder and representative of the Ninkyo Yamaguchi-gumi, another faction that has broken off from both the Yamaguchi-gumi and Kobe Yamaguchi-gumi. Oda's views on the role of yakuza are very different from those of other clans and their leaders, as he wants the Ninkyo Yamaguchi-gumi to be a positive force.

Kazuo (Kazuya) Uchibori is the second-in-command of the Inagawa-kai and in charge of one of its branches, the Yamakawa-ikka. He is considered to be the group's leader by the Japanese authorities.

Tadamasa Goto is the founder of the Goto-gumi, which was an associate of the Yamaguchi-gumi. The clans respectively claim that he has retired and been expelled, but he is still considered, in particular by the US government, to be involved with the yakuza in behind-the-scenes work.

Fumio Tanoue holds a position of leadership within the Kudo-kai clan, which is based on the Kitakyushu, Fukuoka on the Kyushu island of Japan.

Seiji Matsuo is the leader of the Dojin-kai, which has been involved in many conflicts with the Kyushu Seido-kai.

Nozomu Ikezawa is the president of the Kyodo-kai, which is a small group mainly located in Hiroshima.

Masahiro Namikawa is the leader of the Kyushu Seido-kai, which has been involved in many conflicts with the Dojin-kai.

Masaru Nogi has a leadership position in the Kyokuto-kai, a small Tokyo-based yakuza organization.

Yuuji Kimura is the leader of the Azuma-gumi, a small yakuza group in Osaka.

Tadashi Irie is in charge of the Takumi-gumi, a group that is located in Japan's Kansai region and is associated with the Yamaguchi-gumi. He is also viewed as the third-in-command of the Yamaguchi-gumi.

Questions to Consider

- How should the yakuza conduct themselves? Do changing times call for the reorganization of the yakuza?
- Should yakuza organizations focus only on protecting their own interests or do the increased regulations set by the government suggest the need for clans to work together to maintain their prevalence and power?
- Will the yakuza benefit more from staying connected and in contact with citizens or by moving all their business and proceedings underground?
- How can yakuza groups use the technological innovations of the 21st century to make their operations more efficient and functional?

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