

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of the Yeshiva University Office of Admissions and the YUNMUN Secretariat, I am truly honored to welcome you to YUNMUN XXXVII, the 37th annual Yeshiva University National Model United Nations! A few months from now, hundreds of students from more than forty high schools will come together for one of the most unique experiences available to Jewish students anywhere in the world. The three days we will spend together in February are the culmination of the countless hours of preparation, research, and hard work you have put into this conference. Having been a delegate myself, I understand the time and effort you invest in this project. Along the way, you develop many valuable skills: public speaking, negotiating, writing, researching, and everything in between. You should be proud of yourself for all you have accomplished and will accomplish by participating in a challenge such as YUNMUN.

I'd like to briefly introduce myself. My name is Jared Kinches, and it is hard to believe that this is my sixth and final YUNMUN. I attended Torah Academy of Bergen County (TABC), where I was a delegate for three years, representing Afghanistan in the now-defunct SPECPOL and Australia and France in Security Council during my junior and senior years, respectively. I then spent a year and a half learning in Israel, at Mevaseret and Aish. When I began my undergraduate experience at Sy Syms School of Business, I knew I had to get involved in YUNMUN. I sent countless texts to that year's Secretary General asking if there was any way I could get involved, since applications had already closed while I was still in Israel. When he let me know that a position had opened up, I was thrilled. I joined UNEP as the Admin Assistant, and ultimately served as an Undersecretary General at last year's conference. Having the opportunity to serve as Secretary General for this year's conference is a true honor, and helping lead this conference alongside the rest of the Secretariat is one of the most meaningful opportunities I have had during my time at YU. Outside of YUNMUN, I am a member of the Macs tennis team, a scholar in the Lieberman-Mitzner Center (<https://www.yu.edu/lieberman>), and involved in several other extracurricular activities. I am majoring in finance, minoring in political science, and on the pre-law track with the goal of attending law school in the near future.

Each year, the Secretariat is tasked with choosing a theme for the conference. This year, our theme comes from *Perek Aleph* of *Pirkei Avos*, The Ethics of the Fathers. Hillel teaches, "אִם אֶינִי לִי, מִי לִי. וְכִשְׁאֶנִּי לְעַצְמִי, מֶה אֶנִּי. וְאִם לֹא עֲקָשְׁיוּ, אֵימָתִי" meaning: "If I am not for myself, who is for me? But if I am for my own self only, what am I? And if not now, when?" Hillel's message is clear: we cannot wait for others to speak for us. We have a responsibility to develop the confidence and skills necessary to advocate for ourselves, for our Jewish faith, and for our homeland of Israel. We must be prepared to confront difficult challenges and not back down from the fight against antisemitism. That fight is more important now than ever, particularly as antisemitism has become increasingly prevalent online, where hateful ideas spread to millions of people in a matter of seconds. We must be willing to stand up and make our voices heard above those who seek to spread hate. And this responsibility begins now. Taking initiative does not require a certain title or a position of authority; it just requires willingness to step up and make your voice heard.

That is exactly what YUNMUN represents. This conference provides you with the opportunity to develop and practice the skills you will need to become the voice *Am Yisrael* needs. You will learn how to negotiate and persuade, how to speak confidently in front of others, and how to defend a position even when it may not be popular. You will learn how to work with others toward an important goal and present solutions to real issues.

This is what Yeshiva University is all about. YU is a place where Jewish students can pursue their passions, develop the skills they need, and take on important challenges around the world, while remaining rooted in our Torah values and Jewish identity. YU prepares the Jewish leaders of tomorrow with the resources, experiences, and connections they need to become a leader in whatever field they choose, whether that leadership expresses itself through politics and advocacy, medicine, law, business, or anything else.

Our YUNMUN staff is an excellent reflection of this. They are a group of students forging their own paths across a wide range of areas of study, while remaining rooted in the same mission and values. I encourage you to get to know the members of the Secretariat, your chairs, and the rest of the staff throughout the conference. They can be valuable resources and guides as you begin thinking about your own yeshiva or seminary decisions, the college process, and beyond. Don't hesitate to introduce yourself and ask them questions.

I am truly humbled to serve as your Secretary-General for YUNMUN XXXVII. I hope that YUNMUN is as rewarding, exciting, and memorable for you as it was for me when I was a delegate. As you prepare for YUNMUN, remember how important the work you are doing is. You are beginning to develop the skills and confidence you will need to make your voice heard. If you have any questions or simply want to introduce yourself, I am always happy to hear from you. My email is jkinches@mail.yu.edu. I cannot wait to see all that you will accomplish.

Sincerely,
Jared Kinches
Secretary General, YUNMUN XXXVII