



*Boston University Academy Model United Nations Conference IV
Saturday, January 30 to Sunday, January 31, 2016
Boston University Academy
Boston, MA*

***Disarmament and
International Security
Committee
(DISEC)***

General Assembly

Background Guide

A welcome from the chair

Hello delegates,

My name is Nate, and I'm going to be your chair this year. I did Model UN throughout middle school. In fact, as a middle schooler, I attended BUAMUN two times – just like you guys. Now that I attend BU Academy, I've been given an opportunity to be on the other side of the gavel. This'll be my second year chairing for BUAMUN; any of you who were a part of WHO last year may remember me as the vice-chair of that committee. Now that I have a committee of my own, I'm looking forward to making it even better than last year.

We have two difficult topics to discuss, one made even more difficult by even more recent terrorist attacks. However, if you all do your research and prepare appropriately, there's a chance you all may succeed in finding solutions where the international community has thus far failed. And even if this is your first committee, I'm looking forward to seeing you come here and give it your all.

Also, remember to say hi to my vice-chair, Dariush Ghaffari. He's a sophomore at BU Academy as well, and is just as excited to get to meet you all!

Good luck,

Nate Smyth

BU Academy '18

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Position Paper Information

This committee will require a formal position paper for each of its topics. Chairs will review position papers, and well-written and well-researched papers are eligible for the committee's Best Position Paper Award, as well as influencing other award determinations. Position papers are 1-2 pages in length, double-spaced, and should follow a 3-paragraph scheme: 1) Introduction to the topic, 2) delegate's stance on the topic, and 3) delegate's proposed action on the topic. Position papers should follow the following conventions on headers:

Delegate: Evelyn Huang
School: Boston University Academy (Your school here, not ours.)
Committee: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Country: Belgium
Topic: Refugees due to Syrian Civil War

Committee Information

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) is the first committee within the General Assembly of the United Nations. As such, all 193 member states have a seat on DISEC, and each of their votes are counted equally. The committee works mainly to regulate the distribution and curtail the spread of armaments around the globe, to governmental and non-governmental parties. Anything deemed a threat to international security also falls under DISEC's jurisdiction, and it is often the responsibility of this committee to defuse these threats before they require Security Council involvement.

Like all General Assembly committees, DISEC's resolutions are non-binding. Despite this non-binding nature of its resolutions, as one of the largest and most important bodies of the United Nations, decisions reached here do hold a significant amount of influence in the international community.

Topic One: Rising Terrorism in Africa

In 2004, the Security Council passed Resolution 1566, wherein terrorism was defined as “criminal acts, including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act.”¹ Over the past several decades, terrorism in already conflict-laden areas of the globe has increased dramatically.

This is particularly true in Africa, which saw a surge of terrorism in the 1990’s, culminating in the twin bombings of US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, killing a combined 224 people.² Though similar attacks were not uncommon before this, this decade saw groups which had previously operated solely as domestic terrorists begin to use their tactics against international targets. Responsibility for the attacks, which were carried out in 1998, three years before the 9/11 attacks in the United States, was claimed by Al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda is a terrorist group founded in 1988 by Osama Bin Laden and his accomplices, which, in the decades since its inception, has been linked to numerous acts of violence around the globe -- including Africa.³ In fact, Africa has been a focal point for terrorist activity. Several high-profile acts of terrorism in recent years clearly illustrate this.

In 2012, a splinter group from Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), one of the best funded and most heavily armed branches of Al-Qaeda, took advantage of an ongoing civil war in

¹ <http://www.un.org/press/en/2004/sc8214.doc.htm>

² <http://www.cnn.com/2013/10/06/world/africa/africa-embassy-bombings-fast-facts/>

³ <http://cryptome.org/usa-v-ubl-02.htm>

Mali to successfully capture much of the northern reaches of the country.⁴ The war, which originally began as an ethnic dispute turned secession struggle, saw the rebel cause hijacked by islamists. Organized military action at this scale had never before been undertaken by a terrorist organization. The government of Mali was forced to immediately request foreign military aid, prompting the Security Council to approve the deployment of French forces in January 2013. By the end of February, French and Malian forces had succeeded in recapturing lost terrorist⁵, though sporadic violence in the contested regions persists to this day.

Other large scale attacks followed. On September 21, 2013, ten to fifteen gunmen with links to the Somalian terrorist organization Al-Shabaab entered a crowded shopping center in Kenya's capital of Nairobi⁶. Over the next three days, at least 60 people were killed and almost 200 were injured in a mass shooting of unprecedented scale. Al-Shabaab claimed that the attack was in response to Kenyan military intervention in Somalia.⁷

On April 14th of the following year, Boko Haram, an extremist Islamism group known for their violently misogynistic beliefs, kidnapped nearly 300 female Nigerian students.⁸ This move was meant to intimidate women who chose to pursue education; instead, the kidnapped students were reportedly forcibly converted to Islam and made to enter arranged marriages. To this day,

⁴ <http://www.cfr.org/terrorist-organizations-and-networks/al-qaeda-islamic-maghreb-aqim/p12717>

⁵ <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/a-review-of-the-french-led-military-campaign-in-northern-mali>

⁶ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/interactive/2013/oct/04/westgate-mall-attacks-kenya-terror#part-two>

⁷ <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/09/2013923628350977.html>

⁸ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-27101714>

over 200 of the victims are still unaccounted for. Since then, Boko Haram has been involved in numerous other kidnappings and attacks.⁹ Their death toll so far in 2015 is already over 3,500.¹⁰

All three groups – AQIM, Al-Shabaab, and Boko Haram – have been involved in numerous other killings and attacks, happening both before and after the events listed above.¹¹ In addition, violence related to the Islamist State (ISIS) – a group committed to the creation of an Islamist state in the middle east and who, more recently, was involved in the November 2015 Paris attacks -- has begun to appear in sections of North Africa.¹²

Several factors have contributed to the relative success of Islamist groups operating in Africa. For one, unstable governments and poorly managed militaries have made it very difficult to effectively coordinate defenses without relying heavily on foreign aid. Additionally, this lack of government oversight has allowed for extremely porous borders, a term used to mean borders that are poorly secured or that allow people and goods to flow through with little oversight. Extremist groups have taken advantage of this by funneling drugs across international boundaries in order to secure funding, or by easily moving arms into conflict zones.¹³ These arms also have the benefit of being easy to find among the constant wars in the region, such as Libya's 2011 Civil War, has created an influx of weaponry into the region. Armaments from this conflict helped fuel AQIM's aforementioned attack on northern Mali.¹⁴

⁹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/press-releases/2015/04/nigeria-abducted-women-and-girls-forced-to-join-boko-haram-attacks/>

¹⁰ <https://www.enca.com/africa/boko-haram-death-toll-escalates>

¹¹ <http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2015/07/daily-chart-jihadists-africa>

¹² <http://www.cnn.com/2015/11/14/world/paris-attacks/>

¹³ <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2013/09/why-africa-is-the-new-terrorism-hub/279956/>

¹⁴ <http://www.cfr.org/terrorist-organizations-and-networks/al-qaeda-islamic-maghreb-aqim/p12717>

For the most part, the international community has focused their efforts on fighting terrorism in the Middle East. Most actions undertaken in Africa, such as the French intervention in Mali, have been more reactionary than preventative. Certain programs have aimed to address this problem; for example, the US-lead Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTI) works with local militaries “to enhance the indigenous capacities of governments in [Africa] to confront the challenge posed by terrorist organizations in the trans-Sahara.”¹⁵ However, none of these programs have been able to properly tackle the factors allowing terrorist organizations to achieve such widespread success in the first place. Any resolutions hoping to adequately do so must be prepared to address the issues that have made Africa such an unstable part of the world in the first place.

Questions to Consider:

- What factors have allowed terrorism in Africa to become more widespread than it has in other regions? What can be done to address these unique factors?
- Is direct military intervention, such as the French involvement in Mali, an effective tool for countering terrorist uprisings? If so, who should be leading these interventions?
- Are diplomatic options feasible? Can terrorists be negotiated with?

¹⁵ <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/programs/index.htm#TSCTP>

Bloc Positions:

African Nations Affected by Terrorism: Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Mali, Kenya, Tanzania, Somalia, Algeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Egypt, Morocco.

Rich Nations Capable of Providing Aid: United States, United Kingdom, France, China, Russia, Argentina, Germany, Japan, Norway, Korea, Canada, New Zealand, Israel, Spain, Italy, Switzerland.

Third World Nations / Nations Incapable of Providing Military Aid: India, North Korea, Iran, Syria, Turkey, Venezuela, Mexico, Indonesia, Guatemala, Bangladesh.

Topic Two: Chemical Weapons

The landmark Chemical Weapons Convention of 1988 (CWC) formerly defined chemical weapons as “ammunition or device, specifically designed to cause death or other harm through toxic properties of toxic chemicals.”¹⁶ Modern chemical weapons generally consist of weaponized gases.

The first of these modern chemical weapons were invented during World War I. Chlorine gas and, later, mustard gas, accounted for at least 90,000 deaths over the course of WWI. Some estimates place as many as one million casualties, with 100,000 – 250,000 of these being among civilians. Mustard gas in particular proved effective as a battlefield weapon; it causes severe irritation and blistering of the skin, swelling of the eyes, temporary blindness, abdominal pain,

¹⁶ http://www.cwc.gov/cwc_authority_legislation_s3.html

and respiratory issues.¹⁷ Those exposed to lethal doses could suffer for up to five days before death. Mustard gas, and other gases of this type, are known as blister agents. Chlorine gas, which works by restricting the airflow of its victim¹⁸, is known as a choking agent.

In the immediate aftermath of the war, the international community came together to ban the further use of chemical weapons in warfare. The result was the 1925 Geneva Protocol.¹⁹ Though it prevented their use, the protocol notably allowed for the continued stockpiling and possession of such weapons. Also notable is that fact that several nations wouldn't ratify the treaty until the 1970's – chief amongst them being the United States and Japan. They worried that, should their enemies use them, they would be unable to retaliate.²⁰ More precisely, the fear was that, should they agree not to use chemical weapons, there would be nothing stopping their enemies from using them against them. As such they hoped to retain their weapons in the name of deterrence. Even so, neither nation ever openly broke the treaty, as chemical weapons were never used against them.

Even so, the Geneva Protocol was largely successful in preventing the use of chemical weapons in World War II. However, wartime research and development did lead to the discovery of a new and extraordinarily dangerous category of weapons: nerve agents. These chemicals worked by disrupting the normal functions of the nervous system, leading the uncontrollable muscle contractions. Eventually, victims lose control of all bodily functions, which, if left

¹⁷ <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/sulfurmustard/basics/facts.asp>

¹⁸ <http://www.vlib.us/medical/gaswar/chlorine.htm>

¹⁹ <http://www.un.org/disarmament/WMD/Bio/1925GenevaProtocol.shtml>

²⁰ <http://www.state.gov/t/isn/4784.htm>

untreated, will cause death by asphyxiation.²¹ Even those lucky enough to survive often suffer lasting damage; however, the long-term effects have not yet been studied conclusively.²²

These nerve agents were initially produced by teams of Nazi scientists. They produced three strains of nerve agents: sarin, tabun, and soman. None of them were used during World War II. Their first confirmed use did not come until the the Iran-Iraq war in the early 1980's, when Saddam Hussein reportedly used both tabun and, later, sarin against opposing Iranian forces.²³ Sarin was also used in a high-profile terrorist attack on the Tokyo subway system in 1995, killing twelve.²⁴

More recently, sarin gas was used during the ongoing Syrian Civil War. On the August 21, 2013, rockets carrying sarin gas were launched into the suburbs around Syria's capital of Damascus.²⁵ The death toll reached 1,429, according to a statement released by the White House,²⁶ though estimates have gone as high as 1,726.²⁷ At the time of the attacks, both sides blamed each other. The government says the rebels perpetrated the attacks, while the rebels claim the government did. It is still unclear exactly who should be held responsible. However, several independent studies published seemed to implicate government forces, putting Syria in direct violation of the Geneva Protocols.^{28 29 30}

²¹ <https://www.opcw.org/about-chemical-weapons/types-of-chemical-agent/nerve-agents/#c4116>

²² <http://www.gulflink.osd.mil/agent.html>

²³ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/middle_east/02/iraq_events/html/chemical_warfare.stm

²⁴ <http://www.crimemuseum.org/crime-library/tokyo-subway-attack>

²⁵ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-23927399>

²⁶ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/08/30/government-assessment-syrian-government-s-use-chemical-weapons-august-21>

²⁷ <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2013/Aug-22/228268-bodies-still-being-found-after-alleged-syria-chemical-attack-opposition.ashx#axzz2chzutFua>

²⁸ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/08/30/government-assessment-syrian-government-s-use-chemical-weapons-august-21>

The most recent international treaty on chemical weapons is the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention³¹ (CWC), which seeks to prohibit the further manufacturing of chemical weapons and to destroy current chemical weapon stockpiles. It has been signed by 192 member states, and ratified by 190.³² The CWC created the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to oversee the process of gathering and destroying all chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities. As of October 2014, the OPCW claims that 90% of all chemical weapons stockpiles have been destroyed.³³ However, this still leaves over 10,000 metric tons of chemical weapons accounted for in national stockpiles, and an unknown amount unaccounted for. Your goal in this committee will be to collaborate to pass resolutions that can help account for the large-scale chemical weapon problem.

Questions to Consider:

- Do countries have a right to possess chemical weapons? Even in the name of deterrence?
- How can we keep chemical weapons out of the hands of non-government actors?
- In what ways can civilians be prepared for a possible chemical weapons attack?
- How can we prevent disasters such as the Tokyo attack?
- How should states that have used chemical weapons be punished? What actions are members of the international community justified in taking?

²⁹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/235094/Jp_115_JD_PM_Syria_Reported_Chemical_Weapon_Use_with_annex.pdf

³⁰ http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/IMG/pdf/Syrian_Chemical_Programme.pdf

³¹ <https://www.opcw.org/chemical-weapons-convention/>

³² https://www.opcw.org/fileadmin/OPCW/S_series/2013/en/s-1131-2013_e_.pdf

³³ <https://www.opcw.org/news-publications/publications/facts-and-figures/#c1920>

- How can we verify that a state is not in possession of chemical weapons? What steps can be taken to expedite the process of destroying said weapons?

Bloc Positions:

Nations Accused of Using / Proliferating Chemical Weapons: Syria, Argentina, Israel, Egypt, North Korea, Iran, China.

Nations Opposed to Chemical Weapons Use (since WWII): Argentina, Ghana, Germany, Japan, Malawi, Norway, Korea, Canada, United States, United Kingdom, France, India, Russia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Kenya, Mali, Tanzania, Somalia, Turkey, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Venezuela, Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Morocco, Indonesia, South Africa, Guatemala, Algeria, Rwanda, Bangladesh.

