

Hilton 2022 Chair Letter

Disarmament

Committee Overview

Illicit Arms Trade in Africa

Use of Chemical Weapons in Syria

Gun Violence in the United States

Incorporation of the Azov Regiment in the Ukraine Conflict

Committee Description:

This committee will be run Harvard Style, meaning that resolutions are not to be written until the date of the conference itself. Additionally, it is highly suggested that every delegate write at least one position paper on a topic, as doing so will be necessary to be considered for an award. Position papers are technically due the day of the conference, but we will remind you guys to bring them in for the second day if you forget. You may email them to either of us or bring in a paper copy.

Please know your country's policies and relations with other delegations well. The purpose of Disarmament is a straightforward and direct resolution that does not infringe on anyone's national sovereignty, but don't be afraid to have a little fun and think outside the box.

ABOUT US:

My name is Josh Monickaraj, and this is my fourth year in Model UN and my first time chairing. I am a senior at Brighton High School, where I participate in Masterminds and our school's e-sports team in addition to Model UN. I look forward to meeting you all at the conference!

My name is Shamil Canbolat, and this is my fourth year in Model UN and my first time chairing. I am a senior at Sutherland high school and enjoy doing Taekwondo, chess club, and studying history. I'll be happy to see you all this year.

Email: joshuam1500@gmail.com

Email: mcanbolat@gmail.com

Topic #1: Illicit Arms Trade in Africa

According to the Economic, Social, and Cultural Council of the African Union Commission, there are at least 120,000 illegal small arms and light weapons (SALWs) in circulation. These illegal weapons have fed into rising criminal activity, conflict, and instability, and are a threat to overall peace in the area.

There have been several attempts to crack down on arms trafficking in recent years. Places such as Cameroon have made punishments for involvement in such activities harsher, and have held conferences with other African nations to address the problem. Despite this, the military responses by Cameroon have led to increased tensions instead of the intended, opposite effect. The limited resources of several other governments poses another obstacle to the issue, as many places don't have the proper infrastructure to combat arms trafficking.

The usual demand of firearms from hunters and bandits is one reason for arms trafficking. In addition, growing instability in many regions has caused people to turn illicit arms trading as a means of self-defense. The introduction of new arms and ammunition further leads to instability, which feeds into the cycle.

A growing demand for illicit goods has contributed to the surge in activity in trafficking networks, and expanded these networks to unstable regions previously not included. This has further increased the risk of armed violence and insecurity due to organized crime and terrorism all over Africa. The networks used for arms trafficking are also used for other illicit goods, such as animal products or medications. The expansion of these networks would lead to increased illegal trading of those products, as well as arms.



How can the UN effectively crack down on illicit arms trading without further exacerbating tensions? Given the growing instability, how can we make sure that people don't turn to illicit arms as a means of self-defense? How can governments with limited resources be supported to prevent further expansion of trafficking networks?

Resources:

Enact: Déby's death accelerates illicit arms flows across Central Africa

<https://enactafrica.org/enact-observer/debys-death-accelerates-illicit-arms-flows-across-central-africa>

The Conversation: Arms Trade to Africa Can Be Opaque: Why This is Dangerous

<https://theconversation.com/arms-trade-to-africa-can-be-opaque-why-this-is-dangerous-175996>

Homeland Security Today: Arrests, Thousands of Seizures in African Clampdown on Firearms Trafficking

<https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/border-security/arrests-thousands-of-seizures-in-african-clampdown-on-firearms-trafficking/>

Image:

https://s1.econotimes.com/assets/uploads/202202086a089f5c40e2a1094_th_1024x0.jpg

Topic #2: Use of Chemical Weapons in Syria

The threat of chemical weapons being used is nothing new. Chemical weapons, and their proliferation, has been something countries have tried to prevent for years. One example of this is the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

In Syria's initial declaration to the OPCW in 2013, Syria included a plan to destroy stockpiles. Later, a UN Security Council Resolution again called on Syria to stop the use, development, stockpiling, or transfer of chemical weapons. Unfortunately, Syria has not followed either of these documents, breaking their promises and precious policy stances.

Since 2012, 98% of chemical weapons attacks in Syria have been carried out under President Bashar al-Assad's regime, according to a study by the Global Public Policy Institute. These attacks were carried out on Syrian civilians. The Al-Assad administration has been non compliant and has given inaccurate responses about claims of chemical weapons misuse to the OPCW and the UN.

The denial of misuse by Assad has been aided by his Russian backing. Russia has accused western countries of being biased against Syria, and condemned any reports as being illegitimate. Due to this, many now fear Russian use of chemical weapons in places such as Ukraine.



Many blame the lack of accountability from Syria on the lack of pressure from the international community. Without this pressure, Syria has been able to deny all wrongdoing, free of consequences. The evidence for violations of chemical weapons agreements has been present, but without the proper action to support such accusations, Syria has avoided serious punishment.

How can accurate and transparent investigations into chemical weapon use be carried out in a manner that is agreeable to all parties? How can perpetrators of chemical weapon abuses be brought to justice, without infringing on national sovereignty? How can the UN encourage Syrian and Russian cooperation with the west?

Resources:

Arab News: For the 105th time, UN Calls on Syrian Regime to Come Clean About its Chemical Weapons

<https://www.arabnews.com/node/2126466/middle-east>

NPR: More Than 300 Chemical Attacks Launched During Syrian Civil War, Study Says

<https://www.npr.org/2019/02/17/695545252/more-than-300-chemical-attacks-launched-during-syrian-civil-war-study-says>

ABC: Chemical Weapons Use From Syrian War Stokes Russian Fears

<https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/chemical-weapons-syrian-war-stokes-ukraines-fears-84060019>

Image:

[https://cdn.vox-cdn.com/thumbor/0nb2o_KOsk-FHGKNh1HC7xcvnTO=/0x0:3000x2250/920x613/filters:focal\(0x0:3000x2250\):format\(webp\)/cdn.vox-cdn.com/uploads/chorus_image/image/46823910/GettyImages-476741483.0.0.jpg](https://cdn.vox-cdn.com/thumbor/0nb2o_KOsk-FHGKNh1HC7xcvnTO=/0x0:3000x2250/920x613/filters:focal(0x0:3000x2250):format(webp)/cdn.vox-cdn.com/uploads/chorus_image/image/46823910/GettyImages-476741483.0.0.jpg)

Topic #3: Gun Violence in the United States

Globally, there are about 500 gun violence related deaths every day. The United States of America, a nation with more guns than citizens, makes up about 40 of these deaths every day, not counting suicides and mishaps. Gun violence in the United States is a multifaceted issue, but it has been exacerbated by easy access to firearms and a powerful gun lobby.

Because the United States does not run a unitary system, different states may have different laws that make it easier or harder to access firearms. States like California or Massachusetts require citizens to undergo a background check and lengthy wait period while more lenient states like Texas do not have these restrictions. Gun ownership and gun violence rates change depending on the state and its specific policies.



Each year close to 8,000 children are shot in the United States. Perhaps the most controversial topic regarding gun violence and children is school shootings. Since 2020 alone there have been 74 school shooting incidents in the United States. Furthermore, in its entire history, the United States has had a total of 288 school shooting incidents, more than the entire rest of the world combined.

Gun violence disproportionately affects lower-income urban residents, who are often African-American, as they are caught in the crossfire of gang violence. Cities with high gang activity like Chicago and Los Angeles make up nearly half of all gang related homicides. Homicide rates have been increasing in general across most cities, with an estimated 25,000 gangs nationwide.

Actions have been taken on both a grassroots and legislative level for more gun control regulations, however these moves have been hindered by gun rights activist groups like the National Rifle Association and their support base of many millions of Americans who believe in the right to bear arms no matter what. In the deadlock, the only real change or lack thereof has appeared in individual states that lean to one side or the other.

What makes the United States so different from other nations that it experiences such astronomically high numbers of school shootings? How can the committee bypass the powerful gun lobby to make an

all-encompassing resolution? Can gangs and cartels be disarmed in a peaceful manner with respect to the safety of civilians living in United States cities?

Resources:

World Population Review: School Shootings by Country

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/school-shootings-by-country>

Youth: Federal Data on Gang Involvement

<https://youth.gov/youth-topics/preventing-gang-involvement/federal-data>

Team Enough: Gun Violence Statistics

<https://www.teamenough.org/gun-violence-statistics>

Image:

<https://media.gq.com/photos/57cedd2a0bd760b603894544/master/pass/columbine-never-sleeps-03.jpg>

Topic #4: Incorporation of the Azov Regiment in the Ukraine Conflict

When Russia moved forces into Eastern Ukraine in February of 2022, it reignited the 8 year long conflict that began with the Russian annexation of Crimea. As Ukraine's capital and major cities come at risk of being captured, the nation increasingly turns to support from anywhere it can get. Many volunteer militias, foreign and domestic, have answered the call to arms.

The Azov Regiment, formerly known as the Azov Battalion, is one such volunteer group. Its roughly 2000 members have seen combat in many important battles, most recently in Mariupol and Kiev. They are a proficient fighting force who have been around since the Donbas war in 2014.

However, they have always been controversial for the ideological makeup of their members, who some have described as "Far right," "Neo-Nazi," or "Fascist." They were fully incorporated into the Ukrainian armed forces only half a year after their formation.

As Ukraine has become less reliant on paramilitary groups, the importance of the Azov Regiment has dwindled. Due to outside pressure from Ukraine and its allies they have been forced to give up some of their extremism as well. However, members and leaders of the group have admitted that they definitely have Neo-Nazis in their ranks. They also use Nazi imagery such as the wolfs-angel and black sun in their emblems.



Russian President Vladimir Putin has announced that one of his goals for the war was to

"De-Nazify" Ukraine. He was most likely referring to the Azov Regiment. While the incorporation of such an extremist regiment is worrying, Ukraine is still one of the least anti-Semitic nations in Eastern Europe and their president, Volodymyr Zelensky, is of Jewish descent.

Still, leaders of the group like Andriy Biletsky, who deny the group's Nazism, are figures in the far-right Social Nationalist movement, and they would have incentive to ignore such ideology in their ranks. Due to contradicting claims from both sides in a deeply polarizing conflict, the international community is still uncertain as to the groups true ideology and makeup.

It would be to the advantage of Russia for its claims about the Azov regiment to turn out true, and the same can be said for Ukraine and its claims. Thus, the goal of the United Nations in this matter is to investigate the group in a non-partisan fashion and then act accordingly in a way that does not interfere in the Russo-Ukrainian conflict militarily.

How can the United Nation reach a resolution whose purpose is to disarm radical groups and not take sides? Are the Azov Regiment worth discussing or have they lost their radical elements? How can we speak objectively on the issue without playing into either side's narrative?

Resources:

Britannica: Ukraine Crisis

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ukraine-crisis>

Washington Post: Ukraine Military Right Wing Militias

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/04/06/ukraine-military-right-wing-militias/>

Fact Check: The Facts on De-Nazifying Ukraine

<https://www.factcheck.org/2022/03/the-facts-on-de-nazifying-ukraine/>

Image:

<https://theintercept.imgix.net/wp-uploads/sites/1/2022/06/GettyImages-1207144800-Azov-Neo-Nazi-Ukraine.jpg?auto=compress%2Cformat&q=90&fit=crop&w=1440&h=720>