

COMMITTEE GUIDE

Disarmament and International Security Committee

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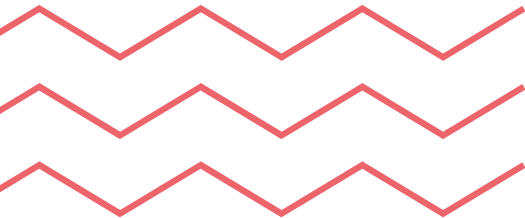
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PRESIDENT'S WELCOME LETTER

Dear delegates,

We give you a warm welcome to this edition of GLCMUN and the Disarmament and International Security Committee. We are Lucía Loaiza and María Paula Mena, students from Colegio Bolívar and Colegio Colombo Británico, and it is our honor to serve as your Presidents in this committee.

We have been involved with Model UN for several years, taking part in numerous models and both as delegates and chairs. Our extensive experience with the MUN structure has helped us develop an understanding of diplomatic procedures for debating, which will help lead you through this process.

In this committee, delegates will have the opportunity to debate important and pressing global issues. We expect these topics to be debated and taken very seriously, respectfully and with a final goal of collaboration. It is of high importance that all delegates present in the committee room participate actively throughout the conference to ensure that everyone is heard for a dynamic and more meaningful debate.

This committee will be the perfect opportunity to develop and strengthen several important skills like public speaking, teamwork, negotiation, and critical thinking. These abilities will not only help for model help in model UN but also for both academic and professional aspects of the real world.

We invite every delegate to take an active part in the debate respectfully, fostering an environment that allows growth within the committee. If you have any questions or need any clarification, please feel free to reach out at any time, as our job here is to make this experience as enriching as possible. We are committed to making the experience highly memorable and rewarding for all participants.

Sincerely,

María Paula Mena

María Paula Mena | President DISEC

Lucía Loaiza

Lucía Loaiza | President DISEC

INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

HISTORY

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) is the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. It was established in 1945 following the creation of the United Nations after World War II. DISEC was formed in response to the urgent need for international cooperation on issues of disarmament, arms control, and global security. The devastation caused by nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki made disarmament a central concern of the international community.

Over the decades, DISEC has played a key role in discussions surrounding major international treaties such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

MISSION AND VISION

DISEC's mission is to promote international peace and security through disarmament, arms control, and the regulation of global weapons systems. It provides a forum for Member States to discuss and propose solutions to global security threats. Its vision is a world where weapons of mass destruction are eliminated, arms races are prevented, and international cooperation strengthens global stability and human security.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

DISEC operates as a Main Committee of the General Assembly. Its structure includes:

- Chairperson – Presides over sessions and moderates debate.
- Vice-Chairs – Assist in procedural matters.
- Rapporteur – Drafts and presents the committee's report to the General Assembly.
- Member States – All 193 UN Member States participate equally.

Resolutions adopted in DISEC are later presented to the Plenary of the United Nations General Assembly for final approval.

AREAS OF WORK

DISEC addresses a broad range of international security issues, including:

- Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation
- Chemical and biological weapons
- Conventional weapons regulation
- Prevention of arms races in outer space
- Cybersecurity and emerging military technologies
- Terrorism and illicit arms trafficking
- Regional security and confidence-building measures

The committee works closely with bodies such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Conference on Disarmament.

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TOPIC 1:

Strengthening international cooperation to combat the illicit arms trade in Africa

CONTEXT

The illicit arms trade in Africa can be traced back to the Cold War and post-colonial conflicts from the 1960s - 1990s when African states began to gain independence. Said these previous conflicts, weak state institutions, limited border controls in African territories. Along with that, thanks to this newly gained independence, there began to be large stocks of weapons from past conflicts left behind by larger powers, but weak regulatory frameworks regarding how these resources should be used. Since there were not enough laws and numerous weapons available that had recently been imported by states and external actors to Africa, said weapons began to accumulate and opened the possibility for illicit markets. This situation made it complicated to track these trades to abolish them, and they began to require the help of other nations for cross-border coordination to track flows and stem diversion.

In 1998, West African states adopted the ECOWAS Moratorium on the import, export, and manufacture of small arms and light weapons. This was an important step, as it recognized that arms trafficking was a shared regional problem requiring collective solutions. In Southern Africa, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) followed a similar path with the adoption of the SADC Protocol on the Control of Firearms in 2001. These regional agreements promoted information sharing, harmonized legislation, and joint efforts to control arms flows. At the continental level, African leaders worked through the African Union to develop a common position on small arms and light weapons. Declarations such as the Bamako Declaration strengthen African ownership of the problem while also calling for international support and cooperation. These initiatives linked arms control to broader goals such as peacebuilding, development, and post-conflict reconstruction, reinforcing the idea that illicit arms trade was not only a security issue but also a barrier to social and economic stability.

Global cooperation became more structured in the early 2000s. In 2001, the United Nations adopted the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which encouraged states to strengthen national controls while cooperating regionally and internationally.

This was followed by the International Tracing Instrument in 2005, which was created to help countries track illicit weapons across borders. The adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty in 2013 marked a major milestone by creating legally binding standards for international arms transfers and requiring states to assess the risk that weapons could be diverted into illicit markets or used to fuel conflict.

Another development that reinforced the need for stronger international cooperation was the experience of prolonged civil wars in the 1990s and early 2000s, particularly in countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Angola, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In these conflicts, weapons were often supplied by foreign governments, international arms dealers, or smuggled through neighboring states in violation of embargoes. Even after peace agreements were signed, surplus weapons continued to circulate among former combatants and criminal groups, undermining post-conflict reconstruction efforts. These cases demonstrated that illicit arms flows were sustained by international supply chains and regional spillover effects, making it clear that African states could not address the problem alone and that long-term stability depended on coordinated regional and global responses.

Despite these efforts, the illicit arms trade in Africa continues to adapt. Non-state armed groups, organized crime networks, and terrorist organizations exploit weak governance, corruption, and illicit trade routes linked to natural resources. These evolving threats reinforce the importance of international cooperation, including intelligence sharing, joint border operations, capacity building, and legal harmonization. Historically, the effort to strengthen international cooperation has grown from the recognition that illicit arms trafficking is a transnational problem rooted in shared histories and interconnected conflicts, making collective action essential for long-term peace and security in Africa.

CURRENT SITUATION

The illegal arms trade in Africa is a significant danger to peace, security, and development. Small arms and light weapons are common in conflict regions and unstable nations, intensifying violence between communities, insurgencies, and criminal behavior. Traffickers take advantage of vulnerable borders, inadequate stockpile regulations, and governance deficiencies to move weapons from sources (both external and internal) to non-state actors and criminal organizations.

Recent debates at the United Nations Security Council show that more than one billion firearms are circulating worldwide, and illegal transfers directly lead to instability on the continent. Light weapons contribute to violence across areas from the Sahel to the Great Lakes, hindering peace agreements and efforts to reduce displacement.

Challenges:

The varied security in Africa shows difficulties in reducing illegal arms trafficking. In the Sahel, the active armed groups, vandalism, and land conflicts create reasons for the acquisition and trade of weapons. Weapons produced locally or that are re-exported are easily found on the markets, and traffickers of numerous land routes that evade detection. In East and Central Africa, past conflicts have left a large number of unregistered firearms in circulation, making it difficult to control and manage their distribution.

Regional organizations like the African Union have created frameworks to enhance collaboration, however there are still weaknesses in the implementation, particularly with the management of borders and the rapid intelligence sharing.

Statistics, Trends, and Critical Analysis of the Main Problems:

A significant trend in recent years has been the trade of legally acquired firearms to illegal markets. Weapons were originally imported for military or police use, but those weapons are lost, stolen, or sold because of the lack of supervision by the military and corruption. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime affirms that poorly secured government weapons continue to be a major source of illegal arms in sub-Saharan Africa, especially in fragile and conflict-affected countries. This trend weakens government power and allows armed groups to maintain their activities.

Another alarming trend is the regionalization of trafficking groups. Arms traffickers are increasingly crossing borders, taking advantage of weak border controls and insufficient cooperation between neighboring countries. Areas such as the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes have become major transit routes for illegal arms, connecting regions affected by war and black markets. INTERPOL and ENACT noted that arms trafficking is often linked to various types of organized crime, such as drug and human trafficking, among others, which complicates law enforcement efforts and adds complexity.

Although international and regional mechanisms exist, such as ATT and the African Union's strategies on small arms, the implementation challenges continue to be a major problem. Many African nations lack the technical capacity, funding, and political stability needed to fully implement arms control measures. Also information that is shared between countries is limited, which reduces the efficiency of investigations and border operations. According to the African Union, cooperation mechanisms mostly exist on paper, while operational collaboration remains limited in practice.

KEY POINTS OF THE DEBATE

- National sovereignty vs. international oversight.
- Responsibility of arms-exporting states.
- Effectiveness of existing international frameworks.
- Regional solutions vs. global approaches.
- Security needs vs. arms restrictions.
- Role of non-state actors and organized crime.
- Capacity building vs. sanctions and embargoes.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How is your delegation affected by the illicit arms trade?
2. Does your delegation is currently facing internal conflicts, organized crime, or border insecurity linked to illicit small arms?
3. What national laws or strategies does your delegation have to regulate firearms, ammunition, and stockpile management?
4. How does your country cooperate with regional organizations on arms control?
5. How has the illicit arms trade affected civilian safety, displacement, and development in your country or region?
6. What measures would your delegation prioritize, stronger border controls, stockpile management, end-use monitoring, or criminal justice cooperation?

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TOPIC 2:

Preventing the Increase of Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWS) and Ensuring Meaningful Human Control in Armed Conflicts

CONTEXT

The debate over Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWS) did not appear suddenly but is planted in a wider evolution of military technology and international humanitarian law. Since the 20th century, technological advancements have continuously transformed conflicts, from the introduction of chemical weapons in World War I to nuclear weapons in World War II. Each innovation created international discussions regarding regulation and prohibition, leading to treaties like the Geneva Conventions and various arms control agreements.

The development of automated weapon systems began with defensive technologies such as missile defense systems and remotely piloted drones. These systems initially required significant human control, but with the advances in artificial intelligence, machine learning, and robotics in the early 21st century they increased the potential for weapons to operate with greater autonomy. The expansion of AI technologies accelerated military interest in autonomous capabilities.

This created fully autonomous lethal weapons that first gained international visibility around 2012–2013, when organizations and experts began warning about the humanitarian and ethical implications of removing humans from life-or-death decisions. In 2014, discussions on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) were formally introduced within the framework of the United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). Since then, Groups of Governmental Experts have met regularly to examine legal, technical, and ethical aspects of AWS.

After nearly a decade of discussions, no legally binding international instrument has been adopted. Even though previous weapon systems (such as landmines and cluster munitions) were regulated or banned through international treaties, the rapid development of AI technologies and the strategic interests of major military powers have made consensus on AWS more difficult for the UN and governments.

CURRENT SITUATION


The rapid development of Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWS) has become one of the most pertinent issues in modern international security. AWS are weapon systems that when they are activated they can select and engage targets without the need of human intervention. While some current systems operate with partial automation, such as defensive missile systems, the newly implemented use of artificial intelligence and more intelligent machines is increasing the ability for weapons to perform complex tasks even more independently. This evolution has raised serious concerns about the role of humans in decisions involving the use of lethal force.

One of the main concerns regarding AWS is both the legal and ethical implications of taking away human involvement from life or death decisions. International Humanitarian Law (IHL) asks for a notable difference between civilians and combatants, proportionality in the use of force, and precaution in attacks. Critics say that autonomous systems may have difficulties with interpreting complex battlefield contexts or making moral judgments in a way only the human brain can. Besides that, there is uncertainty regarding accountability: if an autonomous system commits a violation of international law, it remains unclear whether responsibility lies with the programmer, the manufacturer, the commanding officer, or the state itself.

The topic of AWS is presently under discussion internationally, especially within the context of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) through the United Nations. Nevertheless, after years of conferences and expert dialogues, no international treaty that legally regulates or prohibits fully autonomous weapons has been established. States continue to be split. Certain nations and civil society groups support a preemptive prohibition on lethal autonomous weapon systems to guarantee that humans consistently maintain control over the application of force. Some contend that current international law is adequate and favor non-binding recommendations over rigid bans.

A important topic is the idea of "meaningful human control." While numerous states concur in theory that humans ought to be involved in decisions regarding the use of lethal force, there is no widely accepted definition of what meaningful control entails. For certain individuals, this implies that a person must ultimately decide to terminate employment. For some, it might require oversight or the capacity to take control of the system. The absence of a common definition hinders diplomatic talks and poses challenges in creating enforceable standards.

Simultaneously, the rivalry in technology and security issues persist in fueling investment in autonomous defense systems. Certain states consider AWS to provide tactical benefits, such as quicker response times, diminished danger to troops, and improved operational effectiveness.



This has fueled concerns about a potential arms race in weapons powered by artificial intelligence. The dual-use characteristic of AI technologies, indicating that they can serve both civilian and military functions, complicates regulation and monitoring initiatives.

In summary, the current situation is characterized by rapid technological advancement, growing ethical and humanitarian concerns, and limited international consensus. While discussions are ongoing, particularly within the CCW framework, no binding global agreement has yet been reached. The international community continues to debate how to balance innovation and national security interests with the need to uphold international law and protect human dignity in armed conflict.

KEY POINTS OF THE DEBATE

- Definition and scope of Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWS).
- What constitutes “meaningful human control” in the use of lethal force.
- Compliance of AWS with International Humanitarian Law (distinction, proportionality, precaution).
- Accountability gaps: who is responsible if an autonomous weapon violates international law?
- Ethical concerns regarding delegating life-and-death decisions to machines.
- Risk of an AI-driven arms race and global security instability.
- Regulation versus preemptive prohibition of lethal autonomous weapons.
- Dual-use nature of artificial intelligence and challenges for monitoring and verification.
- Military advantages versus humanitarian risks.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How should the international community define “meaningful human control” in the use of Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWS)?
2. Should fully autonomous lethal weapons be regulated, restricted, or preemptively banned? What legal framework would be most effective?
3. Are existing rules under International Humanitarian Law sufficient to govern AWS, or is a new legally binding treaty necessary?
4. What mechanisms could be implemented to verify compliance with regulations on AWS, considering the dual-use nature of AI technologies?
5. How can states balance national security interests and military innovation with ethical and humanitarian concerns?
6. Could the development of AWS lower the threshold for armed conflict? If so, how can this risk be mitigated?

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FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

With the purpose of accompanying and advising the delegates in their process of formation for this UN model and this upper school committee, we, as your presidents, have some key recommendations for preparing your portfolios, intervention and overall performance in GLCMUN:

IMPORTANCE OF YOUR PREPARATION PROCESS

As you should know, during the model, it is not allowed to use electronic devices to read during your interventions, therefore it's important to have a conscious research with clarity on the topic and your position, for being able to speak with confidence with just your bullet points.

SPEECH

The way you communicate your ideas to other delegates is sometimes just as important as what you have to say. We highly recommend practicing your oratory and speech-making abilities to ensure that everyone listens.

PORTFOLIO

This is not only a tool to get to know your topic and position, it is an opportunity to prepare your interventions in advance. It is important that you include arguments and possible counter arguments for your position in your research paper.

USE DIPLOMACY

It is important to uphold the spirit of diplomacy that defines the Model United Nations. Debate with passion, but also with respect. Challenge ideas, not individuals. Listen as much as you speak, and recognize that consensus is not weakness, but strength.

MAKE USE OF THE SPACE

When doing an intervention, making use of the space allows you to impact other delegates easier and it makes your arguments stand out more.

Finally, remember to not be afraid to talk to your fellow delegates or to ask anything to us, your presidents, as MUN is based on cooperation and improvement, not perfection.

