

Introduction to DISEC

As a delegate at Discourse International MUN you will be taking part in a simulation of the DISEC. In this simulation, there will be an emphasis on deliberation and debate, rather than fully engaging in all the intricacies of the United Nations legal system and procedure. Therefore, our goal in this simulation is to give participants the feeling of what is like to represent a country as an ambassador, and how it feels to conduct negotiations in the DISEC. Being familiar with its structure and function will help you make better use of the peculiarities of the system and help you in the debates.

The Disarmament and International Security Committee was established in 1993 with intentions of advocating, debating, and solving matters of international disarmament and security.

It is the First and one of the main committees of the General Assembly. The role of DISEC is outlined in Chapter IV, Article 11 of the United Nations Charter which states, "The General Assembly may consider the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments and may make recommendations with regard to such principles to the Members or to the Security Council or to both". As per this article, the mandate of DISEC is highlighted as, "to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources".

All 193 UN member states are eligible as representatives in DISEC's body with equal vote. Although DISEC has significant importance when it comes to international security, it cannot precisely mandate individual state action, sanctions or armed intervention, hence it can however advocate these actions to the Security Council. The majority of DISEC's funding is acquired from the United Nations' organ, the General Assembly. The General Assembly's Administrative and Budgetary Committee allocates funds for political affairs, international justice and law, cooperation for development, humanitarian affairs, support services, and capital

expenses that all contribute to the General Assembly's work in the international community.

DISEC, with its importance promoting the goal number 16 in 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) within the United Nations Structure and the international community, had a nearly \$5.4 billion in its budget, to "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels." DISEC collaborates with UN organizations, such as the United Nations Disarmament Commission(UNODA) as well as various international and non-governmental organizations that contribute significant groundwork and insight to DISEC's work.

Introduction to the Agenda.

The illegal production of arms facilitates terrorism and many deadly conflicts around the world.

The regulation of primary materials in arms is crucial in controlling the licensed production and preventing the unlicensed manufacture of weapons. Licensed production comprises arms production by governments and certified arms companies, while unlicensed production comes from illegal producers of arms and arms traffickers. The scope of arms that are manufactured include ammunition for small arms and high explosives which are the most common. Most low grade versions of explosives do not require materials that are hard to obtain, most of which can even be obtained legally online as reactants for chemical experiments. For instance, low grade gunpowder can be easily created using common items like charcoal, sulfur and potassium nitrate (stump remover) and triacetone triperoxide (TATP), a household explosive can be created using acetone, bleach and other common household materials.

The main barriers to the manufacturing and distributing of illegal arms are the technical knowledge, manufacturing standards and local laws. However, given the presence of the internet and the deep web, these barriers of entry have been significantly lowered or can be circumvented totally. The dark web provides access to illegal and unregulated materials for arms and is currently the main way illegal arms trade occurs.

The ready availability of weapons and ammunition leads to human suffering, political repression, crime and terror among civilian populations. Irresponsible arms transfers

can destabilize an entire region, enable violations of arms embargoes and contribute to human rights abuses. Investment is discouraged, and development disrupted in countries experiencing conflict and high levels of violence. Countries affected by conflict or pervasive crime have the most difficulty attaining internationally agreed development goals.

Arm dealers sell power—the power to back a regime, the authority to challenge the status quo, and the legitimacy that a gun can lend to an idea. All that an arms dealer asks for in return is money. At such a price, it is no wonder the industry enjoys annual revenues larger than the GDP of some small countries. Guns become highly-prized symbols of power and legitimacy; businesses, aware of their product's enormous influence, will often sell as indiscriminately as possible, even going so far as to arm both sides of a conflict. As a result, arms traders have been implicated in supporting an ever-growing list of violent coups, armed juntas, and terrorist plots.

There is a need to further implement regulations on the distribution of such materials to identify and apprehend illegal production of weapons. Furthermore, countries with less stringent border checks such as those in the Middle East allow these materials to be transported more easily.

History to the Agenda:

Illicit arms trade has been one of the most popular and profitable platforms in the Middle East for decades, with consistent rises year after year. Weapons and ammunition are readily available, resulting in humanitarian suffering and increased criminality. Inappropriate arms supplies have the potential to destabilise a whole region, facilitate the breach of arms embargoes, and assist to human rights violations and atrocities. Illicit small weapons trafficking adds to irregular hostilities in the Middle East, an area plagued by civil unrest. The security council has tried to restrict the worldwide supply of modern weapons through non-binding agreements and embargoes, but these attempts have been ineffectual in blocking the flow of firearms to criminal groups, other terrorist organisations, and other non-state actors.

In its annual study issued in March 2020, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute reported that between 2015 and 2019, Qatar boosted its weaponry imports by 631 percent, Egypt by 212 percent, Saudi Arabia by 130 percent, and regional imports climbed by 61 percent (Wesemann et al, 2020). Prior to 2011, the illicit arms trade in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) was limited and directed through state-sponsored pathways into particular war zones. Iranian armaments, for instance, were transported across the Iraqi-Iranian frontier to battalions and resistance groups fighting the US occupation.

Furthermore, under the watchful eye of the Assad regime, guns and troops were smuggled into Iraq; Iran and Syria joined in efforts to strengthen weaponry and to support Hamas in its multiple armed clashes with Israel. Arms trafficking's range and tactics have shifted dramatically, with networks and routes now extending eastward from Libya to the Levant, westward from the West African coast, and from Yemen to the African Horn. While smuggling across unsecured borders continues, Iranian armaments are frequently channelled into Yemen via the Arabian Sea.

Libya became a centre for illicit economic operations such as arms, narcotics, and modern slavery, as well as smuggling products, after the Gaddafi regime fell apart in 2011 (Basar, 2012; Bromley et al, 2018; Shaw & Mangan, 2014). Arms smuggling is the most important and deadly of all these illegal acts. Due to its complex monetary and diplomatic situation characterised by the extended civil war between the GNA and the LNA, territorial and inter-city hostilities, the spread of militants and criminal organizations, as well as the expanding military and economic involvement of foreign entities, firearms illegal trade has gained popularity.

During the years 2004–2008, the Middle East represented 21% of global imports of significant modern arms, nearly identical to the years 1999–2003. The proportion of supplies to the Middle East, on the other hand, was 20% greater in 2004–2008 than in 1999–2003. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) bought the most significant conventional weaponry in the area from 2004 to 2008, accounting for 29.6% of the total. After China and India, the UAE was the world's third-largest receiver, rising from 16th rank from 1999 to 2003. Israel (with 19% of the regional total), Turkey (with 12.7% of the regional total), and Egypt were the following major receivers in the region (with 12.3 percent of the regional total). For the years 2004–2008, Israel was the sixth largest receiver internationally, up from 12th rank in 1999–2003; Turkey was eighth, down from fourth; and Egypt was ninth, down from eighth place.

Current Situation:

When we talk about illicit arms trading, particularly troubling is the illegal trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW). The reason why the conflicts, in which such weapons are used, arose, is because their proliferation and excessive accumulation oftentimes aggravates conflicts by reinforcing the feeling of insecurity and increasing the lethality and duration of violence. Small arms facilitate a vast spectrum of human rights violations, including killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, enforced disappearance, torture and forced recruitment of children by armed groups or forces. More human rights abuses are committed with them than with any other weapon.

As far as the illicit firearms users are concerned, organised crime groups were identified as one of the main groups involved in illegal arms trafficking. What's more, the 2020 Europol Review showed that the possession of firearms by organised crime groups in Europe is rising steadily. An increased use of firearms has been observed across a variety of terrorist and extremist groups as well. In regards to how the guns are supplied, the global arms market can be divided into three categories:

1. Legal and standard sale of weapons by registered corporations,
2. Grey market,
3. Black market.

Research carried out by International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) indicates that black market trade in SALW ranges from US\$ 2-10 billion a year. Combating and eradicating the illicit manufacturing and trafficking of firearms along with their components and ammunition is intrinsically very difficult given the hidden nature of the problem. Traders have developed complex and sophisticated methods of procurement, transportation and sale of weapons. A common example is the removal of markings (i.e. serial numbers) on firearms, which makes it difficult to track and trace the origin of different weapons. Furthermore, differences in national legislation entail practical problems as well. For instance, what one nation considers a criminal offence and prosecutes accordingly may be entirely legal in another. Therefore, improving cooperation between law enforcement authorities in detecting and investigating illicit arms trafficking is of considerable significance.

After the meetings of the Working Group on International Cooperation and the Working Group of Government Experts on Technical Assistance held in Vienna from 9 to 13 October 2017 and from 28 to 31 May 2018, it was noted that:

1. The Working Group of Government Experts on Technical Assistance was established pursuant to decision 2/6 of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Moreover, in its decision 3/2, the Conference decided that an open-ended working group on international cooperation would be a constant element of the Conference.

2. In its resolution 7/1 on strengthening the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto, the Conference, inter alia, encouraged the Working Group on International Cooperation and the Working Group of Government Experts on Technical Assistance to consider meeting on an annual basis, as needed, and to hold their meetings consecutively, in order to ensure the effective use of resources.

Past UN Actions:

In 2001, more than 140 states sought to address the proliferation of illicit small arms by forging the UN Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The program does not define the “illicit” arms trade, although most understand it to refer to trade that is contrary to the law of states and/or international law. Last summer, a UN conference brought many of these states together again to review the progress made in implementing the program. Many states and arms control advocates saw the conference as a valuable opportunity to elaborate on vague recommendations in the UN program and to agree on common standards for outstanding issues in international arms controls. But, in the end, the two-week UN conference finished in a deadlock.

States did not call into question the UN program or other UN instruments on small arms at the 2006 review conference, and the implementation of the instruments remains on the international agenda. Also, recent developments allow for cautious optimism. They include the meeting of a UN group of governmental experts to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation in combating illicit small arms brokering and several resolutions that the UN General Assembly adopted in December 2006.

As in previous years, the UN General Assembly in December 2006 adopted a resolution on the illicit trade in small arms in all its aspects. The resolution emphasizes the importance of implementing the UN program of action.

The General Assembly also adopted a resolution on assistance to states for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and for collecting these weapons. The resolution encourages cooperation among states, international organizations, and civil society

One of these is the landmark resolution entitled “Towards an arms trade treaty: establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms.” The resolution calls on the UN secretary-general to seek the views of member states on and to establish a group of governmental experts in 2008 to examine “the feasibility, scope, and draft parameters for a comprehensive and legally binding instrument” on the trade in conventional arms.

The second small arms-related resolution, “Problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus,” requests that the UN secretary-general establish a group of governmental experts to “consider further steps to enhance cooperation” with regard to stockpiles of ammunition that are surplus to national requirements by 2008.

Between 2001 and 2005, multilateral and bilateral donors provided some \$660 million to support the implementation of the UN program in at least 94 states. Most support was given to programs for the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of ex-combatants and the destruction of illicit small arms.

The United States was virtually the only state that voted against the resolutions and groups of experts, including in the vote on the resolution on an arms trade treaty. Twenty-four states abstained from voting on the arms trade treaty resolution, including China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, Yemen, and Zimbabwe. Most of these states are important suppliers and/or importers of small arms.[30] This bodes badly for the establishment of a truly universal instrument on arms transfer standards. At the same time, the states abstaining from a vote did not actively seek to block the adoption of the resolution. Some of them may also be open to persuasion and lobbying to constructively engage in the process of developing a global arms trade treaty.

Before the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) in April 2013 by the General Assembly of the United Nations, there was no global set of rules governing the trade in conventional weapons.

Case Studies:

For the past decade, the EU has consistently shown its dedication towards targeting the illicit arms trade on the Dark Web. Specifically, Europol — a law enforcement agency under the jurisdiction of the EU — has been at the heart of international interventions on cryptomarkets. Most notably, Europol worked with international bodies, such as the FBI, to take down Alphabay in 2017 and was also an active participant in the shutdowns of the Wall Street Market and the Silkkitie in 2019. For example, the Dutch National Police was the driving force behind the shutdown of the Hansa marketplace in 2017.⁶⁶ Thus, it is imperative that nations such as the Netherlands share their knowledge and expertise from past experiences with the committee during the resolution building process. However, Europe plays a significant role in exacerbating the illicit arms trade on the Dark Web. A 2018 study revealed that Europe represented the largest market for arms on the Dark Web serving as an incentive for EU members to further their involvement.

QARMA

1. What constitutes illicit arms trade and what is its scope?
2. What are the root causes and implications of the arms trade?
3. What is the role of states and non-state actors?
4. What role can existing international bodies, such as DISEC, play in reducing the arms trade?
5. What are the suggested frameworks and solutions for addressing the illegal weapons trade.

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