HIMUNC VII BACKGROUND GUIDE

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Disarmament & International Security Committee (DISEC)

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the seventh iteration of the Henrico Invitational Model United Nations conference. We would like to thank you for choosing to take part within our committee of the General Assembly, as delegates of the United Nations Disarmament and International Security Committee. The Disarmament and International Security Committee will provide delegates the unique opportunity to explore the effect of imperative peace matters in the world. As delegates, it is your responsibility to think critically and creatively to develop the most effective resolutions to these issues.

The two principal issues that this committee will be focusing on include international cybersecurity and the small arms trade. There is much to discuss regarding the effect of threats created in the field of cybersecurity and how cyberspace is being affected by this on a global level. Furthermore, the small arms trade is a global conflict that has continued to exist, but one that is more evidently beginning to rear its ugly head. A particular increase in the small arms trade and cybersecurity conflicts has stimulated a variety of additional global problems. The purpose of this committee is to develop comprehensive and innovative resolutions to benefit all involved parties, and as delegates, you are highly encouraged to work collaboratively to satisfy this necessity.

To learn more about the Disarmament and International Security Committee, as well as the specific issues we will be addressing, make sure to refer to the background guide to gain a better understanding of how to develop your position. Any questions regarding the committee can be directed through email to either of the chairs or to the Under Secretary-General of General Assemblies. Those who actively participate and communicate with others, and demonstrate their thorough understanding of these issues will be awarded for their performance as a delegate of our committee. We wish you the best of luck!

Regards,

DISEC

Arjun Beeravali | Under Secretary-General of DISEC| himunc.genreg@gmail.com

Karthik Rathinasabapathy| Co-Chair | hcps-rathinask@henricostudents.org

Rehan Ladhani | Co-Chair | rehan.ladhani12@gmail.com

Anay Abey | Vice-Chair | hcps-abeya@henricostudents.org

Background

The First Committee

The DISEC committee was enacted in 1945, being the first committee to ever take place in the history of the UN. This committee aims to deal with disarmament, global challenges, and threats to peace that affect the international community. Furthermore, it seeks out solutions to the challenges within the earth's international security regime.

DISEC considers all disarmament and international security matters within the scope of the Charter, the founding document of the United Nations. However, the committee does hold specific responsibilities, and the two that will be explored in this committee are

1. Arms Control
2. Global Security with a specialization in Cyber Security

The First Committee was, and is, crucial for preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Delegates in this committee are tasked with addressing and finding solutions to these pressing issues within the UN.

Topic One: International Cybersecurity

What is cyberspace and cybersecurity

The cyberspace has become a vital playing ground for big economies to control e-commerce, finance, and trade at an international level. However, this virtual frontier creates high risks for cyber-attacks, cyber-crimes, etc. Nations, their economies, and most importantly, their citizens, find their security put on the line, compelling militaries to attempt to take control of cyberspace. The issues that arise can put nations and their populace in substantial danger. Taking all that into consideration, the primary aim of cybersecurity is to shield

against those cyber criminals and to prevent the potential threats of theft, ransom, and other financial losses. Recognizing the severity of this situation, the UN has taken various decisive steps in addressing the importance of cybersecurity on an international scale. The UN has played a pivotal role in the fight against cybercrimes by laying the groundwork for rules and regulations in cyberspace. These rules and regulations serve as a foundation for nations on how to safely navigate the digital landscape. Moreover, the United Nations has been active in raising awareness of cybersecurity issues. Doing so helps educate nations and their populace in ways that promote international cooperation.[1]

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[1] Basu, Arindrajit. "The UN Struggles to Make Progress on Securing Cyberspace." Carnegieendowment. Last modified May 19, 2021. https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/05/19/Un-Struggles-To-Make-Progress-On-Securing-Cyberspace-Pub-84491#:~:Text=In%202004%2C%20the%20UN%20established,By%20a%20U.S.%2Dsponsored%20resolution.%20May%2019,%202021.

Past Actions

The UN has actively engaged with the vast landscape of cyberspace, aiming to exercise direct control over digital activities and mitigate the threats of cyber-attacks. The UN has made multiple initiatives in an attempt to prevent cyber-attacks. Most notable is the CT TECH Initiative, which aims to help law enforcement and criminal justice. Additionally, the UN has actively promoted international cooperation on cybersecurity, overseeing the development of many conventions and treaties for member states. In fact, the UN operates the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) which promotes international security in cyberspace, enabling member states to collaborate and share their best ideas/practices. On top of that, the UN has extensive intelligence on the usage of unmanned aerial systems (UAS) and

assistance in Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT).

Major Cyber Attacks and their Impacts: Russo-Ukranian War Cyber Attacks

In the Spring of 2022, the world experienced a pivotal moment in the world of cybersecurity when Russian hackers made a significant first wave of cyberattacks targeting the Ukranian digital landscape with a DDoS attack. What this did was prevent access to online services hindering transactions and stopping the flow of many communication channels. Faced with this escalating threat, the Ukranian government activated CERT-UA, their critical cybersecurity response team. Their intervention proved to be pivotal as it helped mitigate the effects any attacks had on critical Ukranian energy facilities and continued to safeguard the nation's vital infrastructure during this time of digital crisis. However, the onslaught continued and many Ukrainian media services were attacked relentlessly and were infiltrated in hopes of gaining access to vital information. With that information leaked, Ukraine could very well be left in shambles with families, businesses, and the government taking substantial losses. This situation emphasized the importance of global cooperation and the need to bolster global cybersecurity. As Ukraine dealt with these attacks, this incident served as a reminder of the dangers embedded in the ever-evolving nature of technology. [2]

2016 US Presidential Elections:

The 2016 US Presidential election marked a turning point for politics, technology, and

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[2] Mueller, Grace B., et al. "Cyber Operations during the Russo-Ukrainian War." *Www.csis.org*, 13 July 2023, www.csis.org/analysis/cyber-operations-during-russo-ukrainian-war#:~:text=Of%2030the%2030%20recorded%20cyber.

relations between countries. Cybersecurity emerged as a key player in this unlikely turn of events, shaping the democratic processes in many new ways.

Russian hackers targeted the Democratic National Committee servers, giving them access to sensitive information, including private emails between candidates. Subsequently, those emails were leaked to many platforms, most notably WikiLeaks. These leaks gave rise to many public controversies which damaged the reputations of some candidates/parties and raised ethical questions about safeguarding our democratic processes, specifically the cybersecurity sector.[3]

Another incident that occurred would be the manipulation of social media. Foreign actors, primarily based in Russia, would exploit many social media platforms to spread misinformation through means of targeted ads, fake news, social media bots, etc, aiming to spark conflict between American voters. Consequently, this led to the concern of cyber warfare affecting the general public.[4]

In the wake of all these incidents, cybersecurity began to strengthen. After these attacks, the US and other nations stepped up their efforts in bolstering cybersecurity measures for electoral purposes. This included advanced technologies such as two-factor authentication, and improving our international cooperation on cyber threats. These events even prompted discussion within the UN on the importance of cybersecurity and maintaining ethics, essentially paving the way for enhanced

[3] "Russian Interference in 2016 U.S. Elections." *FBI*, FBI, 30 Sept. 2018, https://www.fbi.gov/wanted/cyber/russian-interference-in-2016-u-s-elections.

[4] Allcott, Hunt, and Matthew Gentzkow. "Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, vol. 31, no. 2, May 2017, pp. 211–236, https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/jep.31.2.211, https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.31.2.211.

international cooperation, and the ensured ethical uses of technology for democratic processes around the world.

NASA Cyber Attack:

In a disturbing series of events, NASA fell victim to an array of sophisticated cyber attacks. These attacks were done to extract sensitive information, research, etc. To be more specific, these attacks were various, involving tactics such as phishing, malware injections, etc. Hackers, with state support, would infiltrate NASA's networks, ultimately gaining access to extremely sensitive information related to space exploration and scientific research. This posed significant threats to both national security and international space efforts.[5]

Due to these hackers gaining access to highly classified information key to space exploration and scientific advancements, NASA's operations faced extreme disruption. Another impact would be the obstruction of NASA's ability to communicate with its international partners. The compromised information led to a disintegration of the integrity of ongoing projects, ultimately leading to setbacks in research and NASA's development. Essentially, these events eroded the trust between international collaborators in regards to the security of shared information causing major setbacks in international collaborations and communications.

In response to this cyber attack, the UN recognized the implications of cyber attacks on organizations based on global collaboration. This led to discussions on addressing the vulnerabilities found in these collaborations. Consequently, the UN's

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[5] Cohen, Gary. "Throwback Attack: A Florida Teen Hacks the Department of Defense and NASA." *Industrial Cybersecurity Pulse*, 15 Aug. 2022, https://www.industrialcybersecuritypulse.com/faciliti es/throwback-attack-a-florida-teen-hacks-the-departm ent-of-defense-and-nasa/.

focus shifted toward reinforcing cybersecurity protocols, ensuring trust internationally, and guaranteeing the secure exchange of information amongst member states.

<u>Questions to consider</u>

1. What kind of challenges does the UN face in balancing cybersecurity and the basic rights to privacy and digital freedom?

2. How does the UN address the state-sponsored cyberattacks and cyberwarfare?

3. How does the UN promote awareness and education about cybersecurity to the general public?

4. How does the UN make sure that laws and regulations related to cybersecurity are enforced across member states?

5. How does the UN organize cybersecurity standards, frameworks, etc that can be used internationally?

Topic Two: Small Arms Trade

What is the Small Arms Trade?

The circulation of firearms, ammo, and other small and light weapons across international borders is referred to as the "small arms trade." These weapons can be used by one person or a small number of people and are portable and simple to conceal. Machine guns, light artillery, handguns, and rifles all fall under the category of small arms. They have a crucial role in the dynamics of global security due to their ubiquitous availability and use. [6]

The UN's Involvement in Small Arms Trade

The UN recognizes the impact that the Small Arms Trade is having across the world, and its effect on international peace and security. However, the UN does not hold the power to directly regulate or control the arms sale. The role of the UN more so focuses on the promotion of responsible arms transfers and addressing the consequences of illicit trade in small and light arms.

Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo) has experienced a prolonged conflict which is currently being fueled by the small arms trade. Because of historical grievances, ethnic tensions, and general competition for natural resources, armed groups have been able to easily acquire small arms in order to contest these issues. Within the history of the DRC, individuals have been able to obtain rifles and machine guns, greatly impacting the perpetuating violence and instability.

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[6] "Small Arms and Light Weapons." United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. Accessed November 14, 2023. https://disarmament.unoda.org/convarms/salw/.

The local impact on the DRC's conflict has enabled sexual violence against woman, child recruitment into armed forces, and just the general increase in death. The country lives in constant fear, with limited access to basic services.

The global impact on the DRC has increased the chance to destabilize neighboring countries in Central Africa. Because of the transnational connections the armed groups in the DRC hold, conflict could very well spread across the continent. Additionally, the illicit trade in natural resources will affect the global supply chains. [7]

Mexican Drug War

The Mexican Drug War is a complex conflict taking place in the commonwealth of mexico. Drug cartels, law enforcement agencies, and the Mexican government have been at dissension since 2006. Drug cartels have remained heavily armed, with firearms originating from the United States in specific.

The local impact of the Mexican Drug War is, once again, sexual violence against women, kidnappings, and murders all placed in the general regions of where each cartel operates. The communities which once inhabited those regions are still in danger because of the local conflict.

The global impact of the Mexican Drug war extends far past the borders of Mexico. Specifically, because the flow of firearms originates from the US, the problem is further exaggerated. Because of the cross-border violence that has been seen because of this war, U.S-Mexico relations are being placed into questioning.[8]

[7] "Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo | Global Conflict Tracker." Council on Foreign Relations. Accessed November 14, 2023. https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-democratic-republic-congo.

[8] "Mexico's Long War: Drugs, Crime, and the Cartels." Council on Foreign Relations. Accessed November 14, 2023.

The Syrian Civil War

The Syrian Civil War began as a pro-democracy uprising in 2011 but evolved into a complex conflict involving multiple parties, including the Syrian government, rebel groups, and extremist organizations. The war has been characterized by brutality and violence, with small arms playing a pivotal role in the conflict's dynamics.

The local impact includes significant loss of life, displacement of millions of Syrians, and widespread destruction of infrastructure. Communities suffer from physical and psychological trauma due to ongoing violence and insecurity.

The Syrian conflict has had global repercussions, including a massive refugee crisis that has affected neighboring countries and Europe. The flow of small arms and their potential transfer to other conflict zones has raised concerns about regional stability and the potential for proxy conflicts.[9]

Conflict in South Sudan

South Sudan, the world's youngest nation, has faced persistent conflict since gaining independence in 2011. The conflict emerged from political rivalries and ethnic tensions and has been fueled by the availability of small arms. Armed factions have often fought for control over resources and power.

The local impact includes violence, displacement, and a humanitarian crisis. Civilians have been subjected to violence, and many communities live in constant fear. The availability of small arms has hindered peaceful resolution efforts.

https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/mexicos-long-war-drugs-crime-and-cartels.

[9] "Syrian Civil War." Encyclopædia Britannica, October 31, 2023. https://www.britannica.com/event/Syrian-Civil-War.

The global impact includes a significant humanitarian crisis and concerns about regional stability in East Africa. The presence of small arms in the region increases the potential for conflict spillover and regional instability.[10]

Questions to Consider

1. How does the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons intersect with the exploitation of natural resources in the DRC, and how can these interconnected issues be addressed?

2. Regarding the Mexican Drug War, are there further negotiations possible between the U.S and Mexico to stop the flow of firearms

    a. If so, what would the contents of those negotiations revolve around?

3. What are the possible methods to combat increased violence within these areas?

4. How can the international community work to prevent the recruitment and use of child soldiers by armed groups in the DRC, many of which are armed with small arms?

5. How can the committee address the issue of gender-based violence that is prevalent in conflict zones in the DRC, and Mexico in its relation to the small arms trade

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https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/civil-war-south-sudan

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    Election." *Www.justice.gov*, 13 July 2018,

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