

# **Seton Hall University Model United Nations Conference XIX**



## **General Assembly First Committee: Disarmament and International Security Committee Background Guide**

March 24th-25th  
Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ

# Letter from the Chair

Dear DISEC Delegates,

I am so excited to welcome you to Seton Hall's nineteenth Model UN conference! I cannot wait to spend an engaging weekend seeing you all debate the topics we have written for you. A little bit about me, I am currently a sophomore double majoring in Diplomacy & International Relations and Modern Languages (French & Arabic) while minoring in Economics. My academic interests lie in international security and crime while my personal interests lie in The Office, watching Tarantino movies, and reading TIME magazine. I began Model UN when I started college and served as a rapporteur for the DISEC committee last year. Outside of SHUMUN, I also participate in and serve as secretary for Seton Hall's United Nations Association (SHUNA), the competitive MUN team for the school.

The Disarmament and International Security Committee of the United Nations serves an important role in the safety of the world and the mitigation of conflict. In this committee specifically, we will be discussing both the disarmament of small arms and light weapons in the Middle East as well as biological and chemical warfare. Both topics are not static; rather they are developing day by day. I recommend everyone pay attention to the news pertaining to these two topics as it will keep you updated on momentary changes that may occur.

If you have any questions, feel free to email me. I am really looking forward to March 24<sup>th</sup> and to what you all will bring to the committee's debate.

Your Chair,

Casey Stickel

— SHUMUN —

# **Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)**

## **Disarmament in the Middle East**

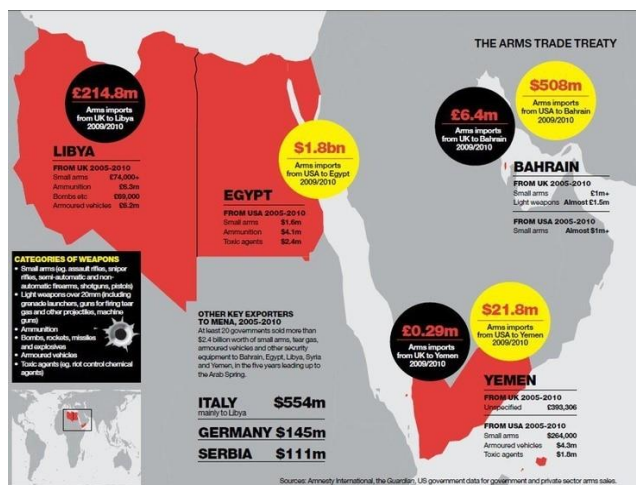
### **Introduction**

Small arms are defined as, “revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, assault rifles, sub-machine guns and light machine guns”<sup>1</sup>. Meanwhile, light weapons are defined as, “heavy machine guns, hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems; portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems (MANPADS); and mortars of calibers of less than 100 mm”<sup>2</sup>. The combination of these two is most commonly known as SALW. These internationally trafficked weapons are often used in conflicts and acts of terrorism, causing humanitarian concern around the world. Due to this, there have been a number of international initiatives aimed at regulating and reducing the trade of these weapons, especially in the Middle East where there is the highest concentration of global conflicts.

### **Background**

The SALW trade is often divided between illicit SALW trade and reported SALW trade. Regardless of whether the SALW trade is illicit or reported, these arms often end up in the hands of non-state actors and contribute greatly to instability, crime, and human rights violations. Illicit arms trade helps to fuel conflicts across the world, particularly in the Middle East, which is a hotspot for global conflicts.

Worldwide, over 70 states manufacture small arms and light weapons.<sup>3</sup> Commonly, these weapons are acquired illegally through the black market. The international trade of SALW is estimated to be worth \$4 billion and approximately 25% percent of this revenue comes from illicit trading.<sup>4</sup> The black market has grown to satisfy the increasing demand of non-state actors in ethnic and internal conflicts. If regulation of the SALW trade falters, weapons previously legal will often fall into illegal circulation. The use of SALW in the Middle East is growing, Small Arms Survey estimates that, “deliveries to big importers in the Middle East surged from \$342 million in 2012 to \$630 million a year later, an increase of 84%”.<sup>5</sup>

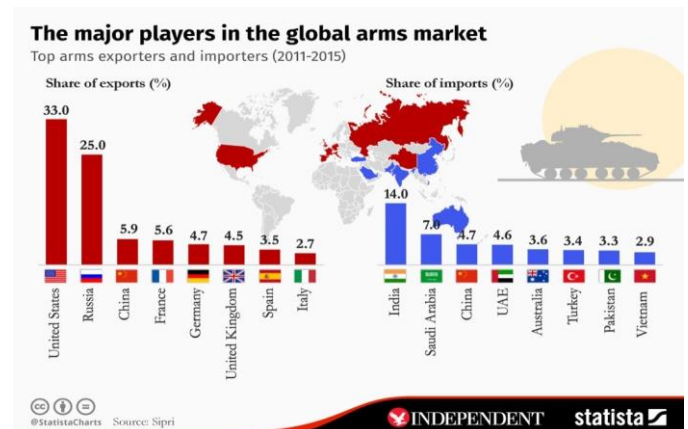


The UN, its branches, and other nations have engaged in a wide variety of activities to both publicize the problem and initiate steps toward policy controls. Some of these include the UN Register of Conventional Weapons, the Wassenaar Arrangement, and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which establishes common standards for the international trade of conventional weapons and seeks to reduce the illicit arms trade. Transparency is also stressed as a powerful tool to reduce illicit

SALW trade. According to the Small Arms Trade Transparency Barometer used by the Small Arms Survey group, “Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Serbia”<sup>6</sup> are the most transparent countries who are major exporters of SALW weapons. However, “Iran, Israel, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates” are ranked as the least transparent of the same group.

Some national efforts are taking place as well, although reliable statistics on the sale or transfer of SALWs are severely lacking in many countries. To address this problem, the Organization of American States (OAS) signed a convention in 1997 that called for standardization of national firearms regulations. Also, despite being a conventional weapons exporter, Belgium play an important role in the development of measure in accordance with the objectives in the Arms Trade Treaty to strengthen and improve the control on weapons. According to the 2016 report of Small Arms Trade Transparency Barometer, Belgium ranks among the top 10 most transparent exporters of small arms.

There are already several ongoing international and national efforts to better track the trade of weaponry, there’s still a demand from groups that aren’t part of these legal transactions. As long as there is conflict and tensions, many of these ethnic groups will require power and labor, the easiest sources to these are through the use of force and hard power. Conflict resolution should be the main focus as it seems to be root of the problem, however, at the moment limiting and tracking the amount of weapons is more feasible. The next challenge would be to ensure that states have the capacity to control arms transfers as well as detailed reporting mechanisms and how these should be run.



# Timeline/Recent Developments

**July 2001** — UN Programme of Action to prevent, combat, and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects is adopted by General Assembly of the UN.<sup>8</sup>

**December 2005** — The International Tracing Instrument, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations.<sup>9</sup>

**2005** — United States adds Syria to the Iran Nonproliferation Act, legislation designed to prevent Iran from obtaining technology related to weapons of mass destruction, missiles, and other conventional armaments.<sup>10</sup>

**January 2006** — The EU Strategy to combat illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition is adopted.<sup>11</sup>

**2009** — Report by the National Air and Space Intelligence Center (NASIC) assessed that the Safir “can serve as a test bed for long-range ballistic missile technologies” and could serve as an ICBM if converted to a ballistic missile.<sup>12</sup>

**April - September 2013** — The UN General Assembly adopts the Arms Trade Treaty by a vote of 153-3, with 22 abstentions. The ATT opens for signature. Sixty-seven countries sign on the treaty's opening day. The United States is the 91st state to sign.<sup>13</sup>

**2015** — The Interfederal Consultation Committee to Combat the Production and Trade of Illegal Weapons was created to allow all the relevant authorities to exchange information, coordinate and take appropriate measures to combat illegal arms trade.<sup>14</sup>

## Questions to Consider

1. In what ways could the regulation of SALW be improved?
2. Would international policy restricting the mobility SALW violate sovereignty?
3. How can the transparency of states be verified? To what extent can we trust this method?

## Sources for Further Research

<https://www.unroca.org/> — Map based by-country statistics for every worldwide including very specific importing/exporting statistics. Use the “Small arms & light weapons” tab.

<https://www.armscontrol.org/> — I would recommend using the “Resources” tab for fact sheets, issue briefs, treaties, etc. For this background, use “Conventional Arms”.

<http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/> — Up-to-date transparency reports on small arms trade worldwide.

# Biological and Chemical Warfare

## Introduction

Biological warfare, which entails the use of harmful microorganisms or toxins originating from natural sources as weapons, and chemical warfare, which entails the use of formulated toxic chemicals with an intent to harm or kill, have been frequently used to terrorize and intimidate. Classified as weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), biological and chemical agents can cause widespread, indiscriminate, and devastating damage when utilized. Due to the significant threat they pose to civilian populations and international security, it is necessary that the use of biological and chemical weapons be strictly prohibited and monitored.

## Background



**“**

**A fast-moving airborne pathogen could kill more than 30 million people in less than a year.**  
Bill Gates at the Munich Security Conference, Germany

**The new bird flu strain had been designed as a bioweapon, similar to SARS.**  
Sr. Col. Dai Xu, Chinese Air Force officer, People's Liberation Army

**We are confident that the WTO will confirm that India's ban on U.S. poultry is unjustified.**  
Ron Kirk, US Trade Representative

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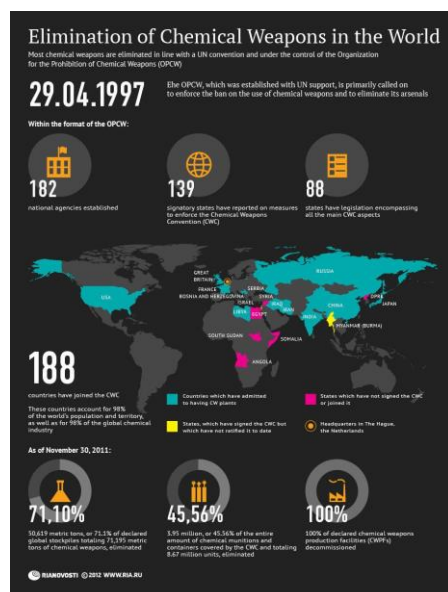
The first major attempt to curb the use of biological and chemical came at the closure of the World War I. Signed and ratified in 1925, the Geneva Protocol prohibited the use of “asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases and bacteriological methods of warfare”<sup>15</sup> in war. However, the protocol was unable to prevent the continued use and development of the weapons in the ensuing years and

decades. The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), opened for signing in 1972 and ratified in 1975, was developed as a modern successor to the protocol to prohibit biological weapons. The BWC specifically bans stockpiling, acquisition, retention, production and transfer of biological agents and toxins in types and quantities that have no justification for peaceful purposes as well as equipment or vehicles used to administer those toxins for armed conflict.<sup>17</sup> The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) sought to establish a similar treaty for chemical weapons. Effective beginning in 1997, the CWC prohibits “development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer and use of chemical weapons”<sup>18</sup> in war.

The CWC also requires the declaration and destruction of chemical agent stockpiles. The convention required that Category 1 chemicals (the highest risk chemicals) be completely destroyed within 10 years of ratification of the treaty.<sup>19</sup> It also required that all production facilities of Chemical weapons be dismantled.<sup>20</sup> As of September 2017, most

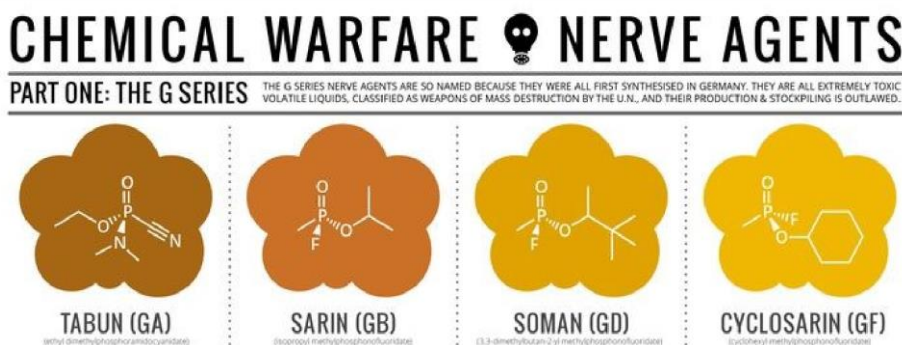


possessor states have eliminated their declared chemical weapons stockpiles and 90 of the 97 declared production facilities have either been destroyed or transitioned to peaceful purposes.



Although nearly every UN member state has ratified both the CWC and BWC, certain state actors continue to manufacture and even use chemical or biological weapons. Additionally, although officially many states have eliminated or are nearing elimination of their biological and chemical weapon stockpiles, there are many allegations of undeclared stockpiles directed at some states. Iraq joined the CWC in 2009 acknowledging chemical weapon stockpiles and production facilities.<sup>21</sup> Plans to destroy the stockpiles faltered after the sites came under ISIS control in 2014.<sup>22</sup> The Syrian Arab Republic handed over its chemical weapon stockpile in 2013.<sup>23</sup> Under a plan devised by Russia and the United States, the

stockpile was completely destroyed in 2014.<sup>24</sup> However, the United States and other major countries worry that Syria still has an undeclared stockpile. According to United States State Department reports from 2010 and 2017, Russia has not met its obligations in either the CWC or the BWC and accuses the Russian Federation of not making a complete declaration of its chemical and biological weapon stockpile.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Russian government reports from 2010 assert that the United States hasn't fully reported the chemical agents removed from Iraq between 2003 to 2008 and sent to the United States for destruction.<sup>26</sup> Other countries are also wary that the United States and Russia both still retain the smallpox virus in labs in their respective countries and worry about potential weaponized use.<sup>27</sup> The countries also worry about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea having illegal biological and chemical weapon stockpiles and manufacturing capabilities and believe that they may be used in the future.<sup>28</sup>



# Timeline/Recent Developments

**April 4, 2017** — The Syrian Arab Republic allegedly attacks Khan Sheikhoun, a rebel held town, with Sarin gas (a Category I chemical weapon) killing 80 people.<sup>29</sup> Syria strongly denies the charges calling the incident a "fabrication". The Russian Federation has repeatedly vetoed a resolution for an extension for an international inquiry into the incident.

**September 2017** — The Russian Federation completely destroys its declared stockpile Category I chemical agents.<sup>30</sup>

**February 2017** — Agents from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea use VX, a chemical weapon, to assassinate Kim Jong Nam, the half-brother of Kim Jong Un.<sup>31</sup>

## Questions to Consider

1. What is your nation's history with chemical and biological warfare and the conventions? Has your nation ratified both or either of the treaties? Does your nation have an existing declared stockpile of agents?
2. Is your country engaged somehow in the Syrian Civil war? Or does your country have a close relationship with either the United States or Russia? Would these engagements or relationships affect how your country might act towards CWC violation allegations towards Syria?
3. Does your country have an interest in increased or laxer enforcement of either the CWC or the BWC?

## Sources for Further Research

<https://www.armscontrol.org/> — I would recommend using the "Resources" tab for fact sheets, issue briefs, treaties, etc. For this background, use "Chemical and Biological Weapons".

<https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/bwcsig> — The Biological Weapons Convention

<https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/bwc> — Summary of BWC

<https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif> — Thorough collection of individual states' commitments to the biological and chemical conventions.



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