TOPIC GUIDES PIMUN 2018



United Nation Disarmament & International Security First Committee



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INTRODUCTION LETTERS

Dear Delegates,

My name is Daphné Charotte and it will be a pleasure for me to be your chair in DISEC. I started studying International relations last year in Paris, which is a very complete and exciting program.

Besides, that's how I discovered the world of MUN, for which I became passionate every quickly. I remember being stressed during my first conference, and then talking with the other delegates and the chairs; I immediately understood that the MUN could make us meet new people and share relevant discussions with them. I have attended conferences in Hamburg and New York, and I am here today as chair of your committee.

Outside the universe of MUN, I enjoy playing guitar or discovering nice places in Paris, where to drink tasty coffee and chill (I have good addresses to share if you are interested). Also, in my spare time, I make lists of all the places in the world that I would like to visit –or even all the culinary specialties I need to taste.

MUNs offer the opportunity to travel and discover different modes of operation and ways of negotiating. Moreover, it allows everyone to discuss with delegates who do not always share the same position, as well as about the functioning of a specific UN committee.

The purpose of this committee is for you to discuss a topic of international concern in a diplomatic context, in this case, chemical weapons, and to find solutions that address the problem in order to guarantee peace and international security.

In addition, it is by working together that you will be able to produce the most pertinent work, and we will be there to guide you and answer all your questions so that your DISEC committee unfolds in the best way possible.

I am excited to meet you all, and hope we will be sharing good moment during socials!

Daphné Charotte

Chair

Hello everyone!

My name is Joanna Veimou and I am a second-year law & politics student at the University of Kent. I have been doing Model United Nations since I was 15, been head delegate multiple times and attended conferences all over the world.

This year alone I went to WorldMUN in Panama and chaired at both Latvia MUN and Canterbury International MUN. When I am not doing MUN you will probably find me listening to music or talking about Gossip Girl for the 100th time.

I look forward to chairing DISEC since it is my favorite MUN Committee in any conference. I am extremely excited to meeting you all in Paris soon and hope you all have a wonderful time at the conference.

Joanna Veimou, Chair



Introduction to the Committee

DISEC

The **Disarmament and International Security First Committee** (DISEC) is the United Nations General Assembly's First Committee, created in 1946. The committee manages issues related to disarmament, global challenges and international security.

In the present case, it will focus and respond to the chemical threat that can hit populations on a large scale. Moreover, it cooperates with the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament.

Following the damage and atrocities that followed the two World wars, the UN Member states of the United Nations took to the Charter to maintain international peace. Thus, this committee responds to the need to discuss and find solutions for disarmament and the guarantee of international security.

Through discussion and cooperation, DISEC delegates will take appropriate measures to tackle the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, and to control chemical weapons proliferation and ensure that they are not used in any way -especially in armed conflict.





Topic A: Preventing the Proliferation and Use of Chemical Weapons in Armed Conflict

Introduction of the topic

The German offensive designed to drive the French and Algerian forces back from the Belgian village of Ypres on April 22, 1915, marks a turning point in the early modern history of warfare. During the battle, 168 tons of chlorine gas was deployed by two battalions in the trenches, creating a huge panic and leading irrevocable human consequences; the death of 5,000 soldiers, and 10,000 wounded. More generally, it is during World War I (1914-1918) that chemical weapons were first used on a large scale, killing 100,000 people in total during the conflict. Since then, chemical weapons have caused more than one million casualties worldwide.

Following the recognition of the danger posed by these weapons, the Geneva Protocol was signed in 1925, prohibiting the use of chemical weapons in armed conflict.

However the Protocol was flawed because it did not prohibit the production or stockpiling of chemical weapons. The Protocol didn't outlaw biodefense programs either. In addition, states that had ratified the Protocol undertook not to use these weapons against States that had not sometimes ratified the Protocol themselves, even in the event of reprisals if weapons chemicals were used against them.

The Chemical Weapons Convention defines chemical weapons as toxic chemicals contained in a delivery system, such as a bomb or artillery shell. The term "chemical weapon" is applied to any toxic chemical or its prosecutor that can cause sensory irritation to death due to its chemical action. Whether they are filled or not, equipment connected with production, or ammunition that can provide chemical weapons are also considered as weapons. In general, chemical warfare agents are man-made toxic chemicals such as than Chlorine, Phosgene and Sarin.

The production of certain toxic chemicals is permitted in certain exceptional cases, particularly for medical research or protection programs. On the other hand, according to their nature, it turns out that certain toxic chemical agents do not need to be used for peaceful or commercial purposes, as is the case with sarin gas, the use of which is strictly prohibited. And, despite existing regulations on chemical weapons, their proliferation, storage or destruction, the international community faces the challenge of determining whether dual-use chemicals and technologies are chemical weapons or not. Thus, a definition of chemical agents, while strictly ensuring the non-proliferation of chemical weapons. The final definition has brought a balanced approach in which the objectives of the 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention can be achieved while retaining the rights of State Parties.

Among the most polyvalent types of weapons, uses of chemical weapons can range from isolated assassinations to city or region-wide attacks. Alongside nuclear and biological weapons, chemical weapon are the second pillar of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs).

Entire communities of people can be killed using chemical warfare. The difference between biological and chemical weapons lies in the composition, dissemination and effect of the agent.



The core work of non-proliferation is the establishment of international norms prohibiting the production MUN and use of weapons of mass destruction. Although this was not entirely successful, most of the actors were committed to these standards. Nevertheless, work must be actively pursued so that the current normative state is not undermined.

Determining global and stalwart measures requires active international co-operation and serious leadership of non-proliferation work. Here, the United Nations DISEC and OPCW1 have a key role.

Furthermore, the OPCW was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2013 for its work.

1 Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons





A. Timeline of Events

At the end of the last century, nations became aware of the need to ban the use of chemical weapons. A number of conventions and memoranda of understanding have thus emerged, while some catastrophes implicating chemical weapons occurred.

1907

The Hague Peace Conferences. Many Western nations sign an international agreement forbidding the use of poisons and poisonous weapons in battles.

1925

The Geneva Protocol prohibits the employment of chemical agents, but the production or stockpiling is not banned.

1939 - 1945

During World War II, chemical weapons are not used on proper European battlefields. Nazis used toxic gases in concentration camps, and the Japanese used them in China.

1980 - 1988

During the Iraq-Iran war, Iraq uses chemical weapons such as nerve agent sarin and tabun against Iran. Moreover, the attacks continue under the orders of Saddam Hussein, against the Kurdish city of Halabja in northern Iraq.

1993

Entered into force in 1997, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction is the first multilateral major treaty on chemical weapon use. It is also known as Chemical Weapons Convention .The treaty prohibits the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. What's more, it includes destruction timelines for existing arsenals. At the same time is created the convention's UN implementing body: the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

1995

Two attacks with gas sarin in Japan: one in Tokyo subway, and one in the city of Matsumoto.

2004

The UN Security Council issues Resolution 1540 with the work of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA). States must refrain from providing any form of support to non-State actors attempting to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, and transfer or use of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). States must adopt and enforce laws that take effective measures to prevent the proliferation of these weapons.

More recent events mainly concern the Syrian area. Refer to the second timeline (Topic B, Part A.)

B. Discussion



Nowadays, chemical weapons continue to be perceived as useful on theaters of operations, whether strictly tactical or as an instrument of terror. Since 2012, 14,000 people have been exposed to toxic substances, and hundreds more have been killed. The repetition of these attacks constitutes a disturbing challenge for the international community.

The proliferation of chemical weapons and the lifting of the taboo on their use, which we are witnessing in the Middle-East, call into question the most fundamental standards of the international order.

The **Chemical Weapons Convention** (CWC) is the main regulatory tool to prevent and combat the use of chemical weapons in the world.

The implementation of the CWC also faces the problem of non-state actors. The Japanese sect Aum Shinrikyo, for example, propagated in 1995 a nerve agent in the Tokyo subway. More recently, IS has clearly used mustard gas in fighting in Syria and Iraq.

Certain poisonous substances are considered chemical warfare agents if they are dispersed for the purpose of harming or killing humans or animals. A toxin, which means a poison produced by organisms, are also considered as chemical warfare agents.

A number of countries have chemical weapons or pursue activities with possible connections in the production of chemical weapons. Most countries with chemical weapons programs have foremost turned their interest to mustard gas and different kinds of nerves gas. At the same time, it should be emphasized that many countries in recent years have chosen to join the CWC, and to destroy their stock of chemical weapons. However, some of them have not managed to destroy their stock yet, and it cannot be excluded that isolated actors may also have concealed limited stockpiles.

Types of chemical agents

According to their mode of action and their effects on the human body, chemical agents are divided into several categories: nerve, blistering, blood, choking, psychotomimetic, toxic and riot control agents. Because of the recent cases of chemical weapons usages, these names have returned to the forefront of the international scene and with them the terrible images of the victims of these weapons of terror.

Blister Agents

These agents include mustard gas, phosgene and Lewisite. They have been tested for the first time by the German army in 1917, and reused during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq War. By inhalation or contact with the skin, they cause extreme damages to the eyes, skin and respiratory tract. However, the results of an exposition to the agent are more often respiratory failures or blindness than death.

Chocking agents

The best know are Phosgene and Chlorine. They have the specificity to attack lung tissues. Those substances are available in the commerce. Frequent symptoms are coughing, chest pain and pulmonary edema, which lead to asphyxiation.

Nerve Agents

The name of these highly toxic agent results of the impact they have on the transmission of nerve impulse in the nervous system, leading, in a way, to a death by suffocation. The absorption via inhalation or by skin-contact has quick effects: modification of the vision capacity, headache, hallucinations and nausea. The more individuals are exposed to a high dose –depending on the concentration of the agent and the time of exposure-; the more symptoms are pronounced. It causes loss of consciousness, convulsions, muscular weakness, complete disruption of the intestinal system. Difficulty breathing and effects on the nervous system combined, the direct consequence is death.

Blood Agents

Hydrogen cyanide, cyanogen chloride and arsine are the best-known ones. Via inhalation and distributed by the blood, the effect is the stopping of the blood cells' capability to transfer and consume oxygen.

Psychotomimetic Agents

This group of substances has similar repercussions to those caused by atropine –used as an antidote to nerve gases attacks. For example, individuals poisoned with BZ agent see their body temperature increased, short-distance vision impacted or have palpitations. At last a quick degradation of consciousness and coma occur. One of the most famous and active of psychotomimetic agent is LSD. It can be used on little scale because its chemical stability is very low.

Toxin Agents

This category is based on the threat of chemical weapons produced by living organisms, such as bacteria, fungi, algae or plants. The development of biotechnology in the scientific and commercial field makes the possibility to use toxins for military purposes.

Botulinum is the most fatal substance, categorized as a bacterial toxin. Between one and three days after the incubation, victims suffer from stomach pain, diarrhea, muscular weakness and vision failure. Lastly, the whole body becomes paralyzed and the victim suffocates to death after a few days.

Riot Control Agents

In fact, CS (O-chlorobenzylidene malononitrile), CN (1-chloroacetophenone) and DM (diphenylaminearsine), are the three major agents of this category. During the Vietnam War, before the protocol ratification, the United States had widely used CS, which gives a feeling of burning of the skin several minutes after a severe exposure. Riot control agents are often called irritating and harassing agents. Three types of riot control agents are recognized: lacrimators, which primarily cause lacrimation and eye irritation; sternutators, which cause irritation of the upper respiratory tract; and vomiting agents.



The UN is the principal organization available to manage the issue of non-proliferation and use of chemical weapons, by the creation of norms to the enforcement of international commitments. Currently, the UN and national governments move from crisis to crisis, from Syria to North Korea, developing ad hoc measures along the way.

The **Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons** (OPCW) plays a key role in the case of chemical attack. It operates only under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) so it requires all states-parties to destroy any existing chemical weapons within 15 years maximum. The organization's main responsibility is to achieve a complete ban of chemical weapons. It is also in its objective to provide a forum for consultation and cooperation among states-parties, and to procure them assistance and protection against the use of chemical weapons.

Nevertheless, its purpose is not to promote peaceful uses of chemistry and chemical sciences.

Several elements can be handled to maintain the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons, in particular from one State to another: the use of international law, for example by reference to humanitarian law; material and immaterial protection against weapons (provision of equipment, transmission of scientific and technical information); or medical help to counter the potential massive damage to a population attacked by such weapons.

The **1540 Committee** was created after the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution's 1540: it calls on States to strengthen non-proliferation efforts in implementation this resolution.

The UN **Security Council**'s Resolutions 1673, 2325 and 2298 reinforce the established points of Resolution 1540. There is the obligation from refrain from providing any support to non-state actors who are attempting to manufacture, possess, transport or use Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery. Domestic law must prohibit such activities, their assistance or financing, by non-state actors, particularly for terrorist purposes; and domestic measures must be taken to prevent the proliferation of WMD, including borders and trans-shipment controls.

The **North Atlantic Treaty Organization** (NATO) Allies seek to prevent the proliferation of WMD through an active political agenda of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. NATO welcomes Headquarters of The Arms Control, Disarmament, and WMD Non-proliferation Centre (ACDC). These organizations establish a dialogue between the members, evaluate the risks for the populations, and support the defense efforts of chemical, biological or nuclear activities.

The **International Atomic Energy Agency** (IAEA) and the OPCW organizational structures are very similar. Because it is the only organization mandated for implementing an international verification system, the IAEA constitutes a real model for the functioning of the OPCW. In the CWC, some provisions benefit from the knowledge acquired through the implementation of the IAEA safeguards system, the rights of access for inspectors or even procedural arrangements.

C. Bloc Positions



The Chemical Weapons Convention –as well as most international treaties- rests on two actions: signature and subsequent ratification. To this day, 192 countries are states-parties to the Convention. It represents at least about 98% of the global earth surface, and 98% of the worldwide chemical industry.

Syria ratified the convention on October 2013, thus becoming the 190th state-party. Then Myanmar raised the convention's membership to 191 states-parties in July 2015, and Angola finally brought it to 192 members in October 2015. Some states have neither signed nor ratified the convention: Egypt, North Korea and South Sudan. Israel signed the convention but never ratified it.

With respect to the OPCW, state-parties that own chemical weapons are required to submit annual declarations as to the functioning of their plans for the destruction of chemical weapons, to declare any changes to these destruction plans already submitted, or to report any transfer of chemical weapons to places where they would later be destroyed.

In the last few years, eight state-parties have declared to be in possession of chemical weapons: Albania, India, Iraq, Libya, Russia, Syria, the United States and another state-party. However, four of them destroyed their entire stockpiles of chemical weapons.

Former States having declared being in possession of chemical weapons

Albania joined the CWC in 1994, but until 2003, the state did not admit he possession of 16 metric tons of mustard agent, and other small quantities of chemical agents. The OPCW declared Albania's destruction complete in July 2007.

In June 1997, India possessed a stockpile of 1,044 metric tons of mustard agent, and completed its destruction in 2009.

Back in the 1960s, **Iraq** had an extensive chemical weapons program under which it produced and stockpiled mustard, Tabun, Sarin, and VX. During the Iraq-Iran War, Iraq delivered chemical agents against Iranian forces, and used chemical weapons against its Kurdish population in 1988. The UN weapons inspectors dismantled the program after the end of the war. Destruction activities of chemical agent's stockpiles started in 1998 but were delayed due to an unstable security situation, and started back in 2017. On March 2018, the OPCW declared that all chemical weapons in Iraq had been destroyed.

In 2003, **Libya** announced the abandon of its chemical weapons program and the following year, the state reported its possession of 24.7 metric tons of mustard agent in bulk containers. With help from the OPCW and other Member States, Libya removed all of the remaining chemical weapons from its territory for destruction in August 2016. In January 2018, the OPCW finally certified that Libya's global chemical weapons arsenal had been eliminated.



States officially in possession of chemical weapons

The **United States** and **Russia** are the two states known to have the world's largest stockpiles of chemical weapons. They received an extension for the complete destruction stockpiles of chemical weapons, because they missed the April 2012 deadline.

While it is true that the **United States** had destroyed 89.75% of its stock of chemical weapons in 2016, most of them nerve agents, this destruction has resumed in 2015 and is expected to end by 2023.

The United States has destroyed all weapons of Category 2 (such as Phosgene) and Category 3 (regrouping munitions, devices and equipment designed specifically to employ chemical weapons) and is intended to complete destruction of its Category 1 weapons (including Sarin, Soman and XV) by 2023.

Russia possessed approximately 40,000 metric tons of chemical agent (including Sarin, Soman, Mustard, Lewisite, XV and Phosgene), the world's largest chemical weapons stockpile.

According to the OPCW, Russia had destroyed about 92% of its stockpile in 2015. Russia ultimately destroyed its chemical agent arsenal by the end of September 2017.

<u>Europe</u>

Since 2003, the European Union (EU) has had a strategy to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In accordance with its willingness to act multilaterally, the EU promotes the universalization of the active implementation of conventional instruments such as the CWC. The EU urges its members to provide resources and joint action for this purpose.

In Europe, countries fulfill all of their obligations under the Convention, in particular those relating to declarations and inspections of military and civilian sites subject to international verification. In general, European states are thoroughly against using chemical and biological weapons in any form of war whatsoever.

France, for instance, has been deeply involved in the process of eliminating chemical weapons. Paris hosted a Chemical Weapons Conference in 1989 with 149 participating States, chaired by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Then the State signed the CWC during another conference on January 1993. Furthermore, on March 1995, France was the first permanent member of the UN Security Council to ratify the CWC.

In most cases, European countries agree on the necessity of banning chemical weapons on all ends.

Others



The case of **Syria** is thorny because of the current situation, but also because the Syrian government is accused of being responsible for over a dozen attacks using chemical weapons. Between the reports issued by the OPCW and the statements of the Syrian government, the Syrian situation is alarming because the total stockpiles of chemical weapons have not been destroyed, although the State declared in 2016 that 1,308 tons of sulfur mustard agent and precursor chemicals had been destroyed.

Because of the tens of thousands of casualties resulting from chemical weapons during the Iran-Iraq war, **Iran** is strongly opposed to the possession and use of chemical weapons. Thus, the country ratified the CWC in 1997. However, the government was repeatedly accused by some Western countries of keeping some chemical agents after its ratification of the CWC. No inspections or verifications were done because the allegations could not be certified.

As for Asia, **China** and **Japan** have long clashed over the case of abandoned chemical weapons. Accidents due to chemical weapons and Japan's reluctance to bear the costs for the victims impacts the already tense political relations between the two countries. Abandoned weapons were accidentally dug up or opened by Chinese citizens, exposing individuals to chemical agents, and brought to the tragic death of thousands of individuals.

Through the CWC, **China** saw the opportunity to finally solve this issue.

Because it had an active chemical weapons program, along with significant chemical stockpiles, the State played an active role in chemical weapons destruction from the earliest negotiations through to the conclusion and signature. Since 2016, the OPCW has been verifying the conventionality of the State and the non-existence of any chemical weapons program, and has already carried out more than 400 inspections.

Japan is still a strong supporter of arms control treaties and has been actively involved in the negotiations on a treaty banning chemical weapons. The Japanese Constitution of 1947 bans all armed forces for all purposes and therefore limits their chemical weapons programs and weapons of mass destruction programs. Since then, Japan has followed a consistent policy of commitment and respect international security efforts.

Its regime claims not to be in possession of chemical weapons, yet **North Korea** is ranked third largest world possessor -after the United States and Russia. Some estimations rate that North Korea keeps between 2,500 and 5,000 tons of chemical weapon agents, ready for use.



D. Key Issues

Since the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in 1997, much progress has been made in destroying existing stockpiles of chemical weapons. However, the CWC is faced with new threats and challenges due to advances in science and technology and the changing international security, political and economic environment.

In October 2017, 96.27%, of the world's declared stockpile, which represents 72,304 metric tons of chemical agents, has been verifiably destroyed.

Methods such as high-temperature incineration and chemical neutralization technologies are currently used to eliminate the last chemical stockpiles, by the United States in particular.

Nevertheless, a number of undeclared biological and chemical weapons programs are hiding stocks and concealed programs. The danger lies in the fact that it is easier to hide those than nuclear programs, for example.

The chemical threat is increased during armed conflict as chemical attacks cause large-scale damage. While there are regulations and treaties that are for the most part respected by the signatory countries in their different aspects, armed conflict situations increase the risk of using these weapons of terror.

This is why the international community must agree to ensure compliance with the regulations in force, guarantee human rights -men being the first targets and victims of chemical weapons attacks- and maintain peace and international order.



TOPIC B: Tackling the Use of Chemical Weapons in Syria

Introduction to the topic

In March 2011, following anti-government protests, the first escalations of violence arose in Syria, a country ruled by the al-Assad family for four generations. Groups of political oppositions were formed; civilians armed themselves to defend their neighbourhoods and villages against the abuses of the army and the security forces. This is how the ongoing Syrian conflict in the Middle East began.

Syria has not agreed to the CWC and the regime refused to reveal its possession of chemical weapons until July 2012 with insurance that these dreadful weapons won't be used against the Syrian population. The regime added that the weapons can be deployed in case of a foreign intervention.

Despite the CWC in force, the prohibition of chemical weapons was not fully enforced in Syria. Not only is the country still home to illegal remnants of chemical warfare agents, but these have been used - by both Bashar al-Assad's government troops and the "Islamic State" (IS). The regime is also believed to have large stockpiles of biological weapons.

The challenge for the international community is to find ways to deal with this increased threat of a possible chemical war, amplified by the many technical and scientific advances of our time.



A. Timeline of Events



Since 2013, there have been nearly 85 chemical weapon attacks in Syria. Here are some of the most relevant ones.

2012

July

Confirmation of Syria's possession of chemical weapons. The Syrian government warns the international community: those weapons are intended to be used only in case of external aggression.

December

First allegation of use of chemical weapons in the city of Homs.

2013

March

UN Secretary-General announces that the UN will conduct an investigation on the possible use of chemical weapons in Syria, in conjunction with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the OPCW.

August

Large scale chemical weapons attack in the Syrian Ghouta area of Damascus. At least hundreds of people, most of them non-combatant, suffocate to death. According to the Syrian opposition, the Assad regime is responsible of the attack, targeting against rebel forces. An emergency meeting is called at the UN.

September

Syria sends a letter to the UN Secretary General claiming that al-Assad signed a legislative decree providing access into Syria to the CWC.

UN Security Council Resolution 2118. Syria should comply with all aspects of the OPCW decision. A timeline is adopted to destroy the Syrian's chemical weapons arsenal.

December

Syria missed the deadline established by Resolution 2118 for sending all of its chemical weapons out of the country.

16

2014

February



Syria is called by the head of the UN/OPCW mission for the destruction of chemical weapons in Syria to meet the deadline of 30 June destruction of its chemical arsenal.

April

From March to April, shipments of chemicals out of Syria accelerate, especially through the port of Latakia. At the end of April, Syria shipped out 92% of its stocks of chemical agents, according to the OPCW.

2015

August

Adoption of Security Council Resolution 2235, creating, the OPCW–UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM). This investigative unit has to determine the responsible parties for reported chemical weapons attacks in Syria.

September

The OPCW confirms that chlorine gas is being used in Syria, but does not assign blame for the attacks.

2016

The city of Aleppo is hit by attacks with chlorine gas several times.

Regions controlled by the terrorist group Islamic State have also received such attacks.

The OPCW Executive Council condemns all chemical weapons attacks in Syria and calls for investigations, inspection and reports at the identified sites in Syria.

2017

April

In the Idlib province, a new attack with chemical weapons kills dozens of people. The Syrian government is accused to be the perpetrator, but Syria denies it. The OPCW leads an investigation.

November

Expiration of the OPCW/UN JIM mandate, responsible for determining the origin of the chemical weapons attacks in Syria.

2018

Between January and February, three chemical weapon attacks are reported in the Duma.

On April 7th, a new major attack occurs in the Duma. This increases the tension on possible military aerial intervention by some countries of the international community – the United States in particular.

B. Discussion



This Syrian case is extremely difficult for the international community, since the UN can only impose sanctions as regards to Syria's OPCW obligations, or impose sanctions to the government for not signing the CWC. According to existing arms control norms applicable to Syria, possession of chemical weapons, per se, is not a violation. The foreign involvement in the area is a major factor providing difficulty as well.

In 2013, following the chemical attack in Ghouta, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2118. The resolution establishes a mechanism to dismantle and monitor the Syrian chemical program. In case of noncompliance, a referral mechanism of the Security Council allows the Council to adopt measures under Chapter VII. Regarding the decommissioning program, some of the chemical stocks declared by Damascus were evacuated outside Syrian territory to be destroyed.

In 2015, the Security Council adopts resolution 2209. The Council condemns the use of chlorine in Syria and establishes -through resolution 2235- the OPCW/UN Join Investigative Mechanism (JIM). JIM is mandated to identify those responsible for these chemical attacks.

In August and October 2016, JIM publishes two reports concluding that the Syrian regime and the Islamic State terrorist organization were responsible for four cases of use of chemical weapons.

Its mandate is unanimous for one year by the Security Council in November 2016, with resolution 2319. However, the last extension requested to the Security Council in November 2017 was not voted because of the Russian veto.

Since then, many draft resolutions were presented by the United State and Russia in order to establish a new mechanism of investigation on chemical weapons in Syria.



C. Bloc Positions



The Syrian government has always made ambiguous statements about its chemical capability. A 2005 Syrian report to the UN 1540 Committee declared that the "Syrian Arab Republic does not possess any chemical weapons, their means of delivery, or any related materials". But four years later, President Bashar al-Assad made different declarations on his country's chemical weapons stockpile, while not directly admitting their existence. He said: "Chemical weapons, that's another thing. But you don't seriously expect me to present our weapons program to you here? We are in a state of war". This reflects all the uncertainties that can be encountered in the production, management, transfer or use of chemical weapons by Syria.

With his decision to send a letter to the UN in 2013, it can seem that Assad is agreeing to give up chemical weapons and improves his chances of survival during the cleanup mission in Syria.

In the recent years, the country said it has complied with all its obligations as being a Member of the OPCW, and that it has done cooperatively and without hesitation, meeting all the requirements. Then, Syria moved on to blame the OPCW's fact-finding mission as unprofessional, deeply flawed and predetermined.

Due to the Syrian Civil War, **Iran** and Syria were accused of cooperation on chemical weapons (sending of chemical agents to Syria for example). Iran strongly rejected the accusations. Politically, Iran's leaders reportedly have differing views on Syria, especially after Assad's use of chemical weapons on his own population.

Russia is supporting the Syrian regime for multiples reasons, such as keeping a strategic position in the Middle East area. Although it expressed some accusations against the Syrian regime at several times and expresses its concern on the premature blames attributed to the Assad regime, Russia voted a UN Security Council resolution in April 2017, denouncing a new chemical attack in Syria.

Russia highly recommends Syria to give its chemical weapons back to the international community. At the same time, Russia wants the United States to bind itself with a promise to not lunch an attack against the country.

The **United States** and other Western powers such as France have repeatedly reiterated their strong condemnation of any use of terror weapons to the people. The fact is that, following the very recent attacks in areas controlled by Syrian rebels, these countries intervened military in Syria. In addition, the United States, France and the United Kingdom fired a significant number of missiles at chemical weapons storages areas. As the closest ally of Syria, Russia opposes any strike by Western countries.

The fight against the use of chemical weapons in Syria is of major importance for the international order. The risk of a direct or indirect confrontation of the great powers in this region is very high. The international community is divided on the issue because countries have divergent positions on the regime of Bashar al-Assad.

The difficulty of finding a consensus stems from these geopolitical alliances, which have blocked the Security Council's efforts to intervene following several chemical attacks on the populations.

E. Key issues



Despite evidence of its incorrect declaration of chemical weapons and continued use of chemical agents on its territory, the Syrian government categorically denies these allegations. At the same time, Russia continues to refer to "the good will of the Syrian side" and the willingness to cooperate with the OPCW.

In November 2016, the Executive Council of the OPCW voted by a two-thirds majority vote on further measures against the illegal possession and use of chemical weapons by the Syrian government. Although there was no consensus vote, the vote was clearly preferable to the total inaction of all CWC states-parties. Not only would Syria's illegal possession of chemical weapons continue to be ignored, but also their use against an unprotected civilian population.

Since there is unmistakable evidence that the government uses chemical weapons on many occasions, the regime is in flagrant violation of the CWC.

The ability of international organizations to act against Syria and against violations of international treaties banning the use of chemical weapons is seriously questionable. Currently, the OPCW must effectively ban the chemical agents; otherwise they could again be used, perhaps in new ways, on Syrian territory.





Questions a Resolution Should Answer

What measures should the international community take to ensure the safety of populations potentially exposed to such weapons in armed conflict?

How can countries control borders and transfers to combat chemical weapons proliferation?

What cooperation should be established with the chemical industry in order to prevent chemical weapons proliferation and promote international peace and security?

What are the best strategies to combat the threat of chemical weapons use in armed conflict?

How can countries strengthen compliance with international regulations and conventions on chemical weapons?

Which measures can prevent the threats of new chemical weapon attacks?

What sanctions can be taken to counter the risks of chemical weapon attacks in Syria?



Relevant Documentation

Chemical Weapons Convection (CWC)

www.opcw.org/chemical-weapons-convention/ This should be your primary source of documentation.

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. **The Future of the Chemical Weapons Convention: Policy and Planning Aspects**. www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/files/PP/SIPRIPP35.pdf

It provides an analysis of the current and future security issues that the OPCW manages.

UN Press

www.un.org/press/en

Perfect for keeping up with news and progress in the work of the UN.

OPCW. Protection Against Chemical Weapons

www.opcw.org/protection/protection-against-chemical-weapons/

OPCW. Needs and Best Practices on Chemical Safety and Security Management

www.opcw.org/fileadmin/OPCW/ICA/ICB/OPCW_Report_on_Needs_and_Best_Practices_on_Chemical_Sa_ fety_and_Security_ManagementV3-2_1.2.pdf

Public Health Preparedness for Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Weapons

<u>www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/reprints/2010/RAND_RP1415.pdf</u> This explains what measures would be taken to protect public health in the event of chemical, biological or nuclear attack.

International Institute for Counterterrorism. **The Threat of Chemical Terrorism** <u>www.ict.org.il/Article/1771/The-Threat-Of-Chemical-Terrorism</u> *This article gives an overview of a potential chemical terrorist threat.*

Banning Chemical Weapons: The Scientific Background, Hugh D. Crone

Cambridge University Press, 1992 Addresses the issue of chemical disarmament and shows the role of negotiations in the ban of chemical weapons.

<u>Chemical and Biological Weapons: A Study of Proliferation</u>, Edward M Spiers Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1994

War of Nerves: Chemical Warfare from World War I to Al-Qaeda, Jonathan B. Tucker Anchor Books, 2007



Perfect if you want to know more about the history of chemical warfare during the 20th century

Chemical and Biological Warfare: A Comprehensive Survey for the Concerned Citizen, Eric Croddy Springer Science & Business Media, 2011

Defines the basics of chemical and biological weapons and the likelihood of their proliferation in the current global political context.

<u>Syria and the Chemical Weapons Taboo</u>, Michelle Bentley Manchester University Press, 2016

<u>Production Management of Chemical Industries</u>, Kiran R. Golwalkar Springer International Publishing, 2016





Sources

The sources are common to Topics A and B.

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Chemical Weapons Convection (CWC) www.opcw.org/chemical-weapons-convention/

Genesis and Historical Development of the CWC www.opcw.org/chemical-weapons-convention/genesis-and-historicaldevelopment/

Members of the CWC www.opcw.org/about-opcw/member-states/

UN Press - Deadline of 2012 for destruction of chemical weapons www.un.org/press/en/2007/gadis3348.doc.htm

1540 Committee www.un.org/en/sc/1540/index.shtml

Arms Control Association - Chemical and Biological Weapons Status at a Glance www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/cbwprolif

Arms Control details on Syrian's chemical activities www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Timeline-of-Syrian-Chemical-Weapons-Activity

Brief history of chemical weapons use www.opcw.org/about-chemical-weapons/history-of-cw-use/

Destruction of chemical weapons www.opcw.org/our-work/demilitarisation/destruction-of-chemical-weapons/

Control of Chemicals proliferation www.opcw.org/our-work/non-proliferation/controlled-chemicals/ UN Office for Disarmament Affairs – Chemical weapons www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/chemical/

UN General Assembly - Cooperation between the UN and the OPCW <u>http://undocs.org/A/RES/55/283</u>

