Dear Delegates,

My name is Parnia Mazhar, and I am excited to welcome you to the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) for the 2020 National High School Model United Nations Conference! My Co-Director, Patrick Leong, and I are looking forward to a substantive debate where we will discuss important global issues diplomatically. We carefully selected each of our topics to ensure that our committee’s discussions will be impactful and will address crucial issues regarding international security.

Last year, I was an Assistant Director for the Special Political and Decolonization committee (SPECPOL). I loved the experience of chairing and guiding delegates so much that I knew I had to come back for a second year as a Director. Before joining NHSMUN staff, I participated in my high school’s Model UN program for four years. I learned a lot through MUN and—despite how cliché it sounds—I truly do believe that it has shaped who I am today. Attending conferences not only bettered my speaking and communication skills, but also prepared me for scenarios that I would later go through in college and in life. I hope that Patrick and I can impart some of our knowledge on to you so that you will enjoy a similar NHSMUN experience.

Currently, I am a sophomore at the University of Michigan where I am double majoring in political science and communications. Outside of class, I’m a writer for our school’s newspaper, The Michigan Daily, and am a part of a club called Music Matters, which has brought artists like Louis the Child, J. Cole, and 2 Chainz to campus. Some of my favorite hobbies include listening to and playing music, dancing, and watching soccer. I have also loved preparing for NHSMUN this year and Patrick and I have worked hard to make it a meaningful experience for you.

After much research, we selected two topics that we believe to be vital issues within the international community today. Our two topics this year will be “Achieving the SDGs Through Disarmament in the Middle East and North Africa” and “The Employment of Private Military Contractors.” As a delegate, you should consider how security weaknesses can impact a country’s development and prosperity, but also how extreme militarization can be detrimental as well. We recognize that each of these topics are multifaceted, which is why we have gone into great detail throughout this background guide. Please carefully review this material prior to debate, and do not hesitate to send an email to Patrick and me with any questions you may have. Good luck researching and I look forward to seeing you in committee!

Parnia Mazhar

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Disarmament and International Security Committee

Session I
Dear Delegates,

It is my utmost pleasure to welcome you to the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) for the 2020 NHSMUN conference! My name is Patrick Leong and I am excited to be your Director for Session II. My Co-Director, Parnia Mazhar, and I are looking forward to a productive and engaging debate where we will discuss crucial issues regarding international security. We hope this background guide will serve as inspiration for your further research into our two topics.

I am especially excited to be on staff for NHSMUN 2020 as this will be my very first time at NHSMUN. From the beginning of my high school career, I was actively involved with the MUN community in my hometown of Ottawa, Canada. During my journey from a novice delegate to the co-head of my high school club, I reinvigorated the Ottawa MUN community by not only growing the membership of my own club, but also helping other schools start their own MUN clubs. My MUN experience has taught me valuable lessons regarding public speaking, negotiation, event planning, and on occasion, improvisation. Most importantly, my motto is “MUN is fun for everyone,” and Parnia and I will try our best to make your NHSMUN educational, inclusive, and memorable.

After accepting my offer to the University of British Columbia and Sciences Po Dual Degree Program, I spent the past two years studying at the Paris Institute of Political Studies. There, I majored in Politics and Government in the Euro-American Programme. On campus, I was also Vice President of RIMUN 2019 and I had the opportunity to work as an usher at the United Nations Office at Geneva. Now ready to start my junior year at UBC where I will major in history and international relations, I am excited to start a new chapter of my undergraduate studies back in Canada. On a lighter note, my hobbies include travelling, skating, downhill and cross-country skiing, and memes.

After an arduous research process, our two topics were selected based on their impact and importance, as well as their potential for lively, contentious, and compelling negotiations. Our two topics this year will be “Achieving the SDGs Through Disarmament in the Middle East and North Africa” and “The Employment of Private Military Contractors.” The first topic will allow delegates to not only address the traditional DISEC issues of disarmament, but also draw connections to the process of sustainable development in a region which has seen years of instability. The second topic will force delegates to confront the rapid shift in military power from states to non-state actors as warfare becomes increasingly privatized. How can we achieve the SDGs in a region rife with conflict? Who has the right to the legitimate use of force? How do we achieve consensus on these divisive issues? These are just a few of the difficult questions that will be discussed during your experience at NHSMUN.

Please do not hesitate to send an email to Parnia and me with any questions you may have. Good luck researching and I am very much looking forward to meeting all of you in March!

Patrick Leong
patrick.leong@imuna.org
Disarmament and International Security Committee
Session II
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A Note on the NHSMUN Difference

Esteemed Faculty and Delegates,

Welcome to NHSMUN 2020! My name is Althea Turley and I am this year’s Director-General. Thank you for choosing to attend NHSMUN, the world’s largest Model United Nations conference for secondary school students. We are thrilled to welcome you to New York City in March!

As a space for collaboration, consensus, and compromise, NHSMUN strives to help transform today’s brightest thinkers into tomorrow’s leaders. Our organization provides a uniquely tailored experience for all in attendance through innovative and accessible programming. We believe that an emphasis on education through simulation is paramount to the Model UN experience and this idea permeates throughout NHSMUN.

**Debate founded on strong knowledge:** With knowledgeable staff members and delegates from over 70 countries, NHSMUN can facilitate an enriching experience reliant on substantively rigorous debate. To ensure this high quality of debate, our staff members produce extremely detailed and comprehensive topic overviews (like the one below) to prepare delegates for the complexities and nuances inherent in global issues. This process takes over six months, during which the Directors who lead our committees develop their topics with the valuable input of expert contributors. Because these topics are always changing and evolving, NHSMUN also produces update papers that are intended to bridge the gap of time between when the background guides are published and when committee starts in March. As such, this guide is designed to be a launching point from which delegates should delve further into their topics.

**Extremely prepared and engaged staff:** The detailed knowledge that our directors provide in this background guide through diligent research is aimed at spurring critical thought within delegates at NHSMUN. Prior to the conference, our Directors and Assistant Directors are trained rigorously through copious hours of both virtual and in-person exercises and workshops in an effort to provide the best conference experience possible. Beyond this, our Directors and Assistant Directors read every position paper submitted to NHSMUN and provide thoughtful insight on those submitted by the feedback deadline. Our staff aims not only to tailor the committee experience to delegates’ reflections and research but also to facilitate an environment where all delegates’ thoughts can be heard.

**Emphasis on participation:** The UN relies on the voices of all of its Member States to create resolutions most likely to make a dramatic impact on the world. That is our philosophy at NHSMUN too. We believe that in order to properly delve into an issue and produce fruitful debate, it is crucial to focus the entire energy and attention of the room on the topic at hand. Our Rules of Procedure and our staff are focused on making every voice in the committee heard, regardless of each delegate’s country assignment or skill level. However, unlike many other conferences, we also emphasize delegate participation after the conference. MUN delegates are well researched and aware of the UN’s priorities and they can serve as the vanguard for action on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, we are proud to also connect students with other action-oriented organizations at the conference to encourage further work on the topics.

**Focused committee time:** NHSMUN prohibits the use of any electronic devices during committee sessions. We feel strongly that face-to-face interpersonal connections during debate are critical to producing superior committee experiences and allow for the free flow of ideas. Ensuring a no-technology policy is also a way to guarantee that every delegate has an equal opportunity to succeed in committee. We staff a very dedicated team in our office who type up and format draft resolutions and working papers so that committee time can be focused on communication and collaboration. Please note that the dais is permitted a laptop to communicate with members of Senior Staff and for other administrative needs.
Educational emphasis, even for awards: At the heart of NHSMUN lies education and compromise. As such, when NHSMUN does distribute awards, we de-emphasize their importance in comparison to the educational value of Model UN as an activity. NHSMUN seeks to reward schools whose students excel in the arts of compromise and diplomacy. More importantly, we seek to develop an environment in which delegates can employ their critical thought processes and share ideas with their counterparts from around the world. We always prioritize a dedication to teamwork and encourage our delegates to engage with others in a diplomatic and inclusive manner. In particular, our daises look for and promote constructive leadership that strives towards consensus, as delegates do in the United Nations.

Realism and accuracy: Although a perfect simulation of the UN is never possible, we believe that one of the core educational responsibilities of MUN conferences is to educate students about how the UN System works. Each NHSMUN committee is a simulation of a real deliberative body so that delegates can research what their country has actually said in the committee. Our topics are chosen from the issues currently on the agenda of that committee (except historical committees, which take topics from the appropriate time period). This creates incredible opportunities for our delegates to do first-hand research by reading the actual statements their country has made and the resolutions they have supported. We also incorporate real UN and NGO experts into each committee through our committee speakers program and arrange for meetings between students and the actual UN Permanent Mission of the country they are representing. No other conference goes so far to deeply immerse students into the UN System.

As always, I welcome any questions or concerns about the substantive program at NHSMUN 2020 and would be happy to discuss NHSMUN pedagogy with faculty or delegates.

Delegates, it is my sincerest hope that your time at NHSMUN will be thought-provoking and stimulating. NHSMUN is an incredible time to learn, grow, and embrace new opportunities. I look forward to seeing you work both as students and global citizens at the conference.

Best,

Althea Turley
Director-General
A Note on Research and Preparation

Delegate research and preparation is a critical element of attending NHSMUN and enjoying the conference's intellectual and cosmopolitan perspective. We have provided this Background Guide to introduce the topics that will be discussed in your committee. This document is designed to give you a description of the committee's mandate and the topics on its agenda. We do not intend to represent exhaustive research on every facet of the topics. We encourage and expect each of you to critically explore the selected topics and be able to identify and analyze their intricacies upon arrival to NHSMUN in March. Delegates must be prepared to intelligently utilize your knowledge and apply it to your country's unique policy.

The task of preparing for the conference can be challenging, but to assist delegates, we have updated our Beginner Delegate Guide and Advanced Delegate Guide. In particular, these guides contain more detailed instructions on how to prepare a position paper and excellent sources that delegates can use for research. Use these resources to your advantage—they can help transform a sometimes-overwhelming task into what it should be: an engaging, interesting, and rewarding experience.

An essential part of representing a state in an international body is the ability to articulate a given state's views in writing. Accordingly, NHSMUN requires each delegation (the one or two delegates representing a country in a committee) to write a position paper for both topics on the committee's agenda. In delegations with two students, we strongly encourage each student to participate in the research for both topics, to ensure that both students are prepared to debate no matter what topic is selected first. More information about how to write and format position papers can be found in the NHSMUN Research Guide. To summarize, position papers should be structured into three sections, described below.

I: Topic Background – This section should describe the history of the topic as it would be described by the delegate's country. Delegates do not need to give an exhaustive account of the topic background, but rather focus on the details that are most important to the delegation's policy and proposed solutions.

II: Country Policy – This section should discuss the delegation's policy regarding the topic. Each paper should state the policy in plain terms and include the relevant statements, statistics, and research that support the effectiveness of the policy. Comparisons with other global issues are also appropriate here.

III. Proposed Solutions – This section should detail the delegation's proposed solutions to address the topic. Descriptions of each solution should be thorough. Each idea should clearly connect to the specific problem it aims to solve and identify potential obstacles to implementation and how they can be avoided. The solution should be a natural extension of the country's policy.

Each topic's position paper should be no more than 10 pages long double-spaced with standard margins and font size. We recommend 2-4 pages per topic as a suitable length. The paper must be written from the perspective of the country you are representing at NHSMUN 2020 and should articulate the policies you will espouse at the conference.

Each delegation is responsible for sending a copy of its papers to their committee Directors via myDais on or before 14 February 2020. If a delegate wishes to receive detailed feedback from the committee's dais, a position must be submitted on or before 24 January 2020. The papers received by this earlier deadline will be reviewed by the dais of each committee and returned prior to your arrival at the conference.

Complete instructions for how to submit position papers will be sent to faculty advisers via the email submitted at registration. If delegations are unable to submit their position papers on time, they should contact us at info@imuna.org as soon as possible.

Delegations that do not submit position papers to directors will be ineligible for awards.
Committee History

The United Nations (UN) Disarmament and International Security Committee was created in 1945 with the ratification of the UN Charter. Often shortened to DISEC, the Disarmament and International Security Committee is also known as the First Committee because it was the first Main Committee of the GA. DISEC was formed to address and solve international threats to peace and security in a multilateral and comprehensive way by increasing global stability, cooperation, and regulation. Per the UN Charter, DISEC “considers all disarmament and international security matters within the scope of the Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any other organ of the United Nations.” DISEC also has the power of direct advisement to the Security Council. Pursuant to its mission of international cooperation in the maintenance of peace and security, DISEC also works closely with other entities such as the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament. Through cooperation with these entities, and oversight over various subsidiary committees within the UN, DISEC guides the topic of disarmament and security on a global scale. DISEC sets the norms that define the peace and security initiatives of the entire international community, including but not limited to UN member states.

DISEC has made great strides towards its goal of achieving greater global security. When it was founded, the committee first focused on organizing itself and establishing commissions that would help with achieving global disarmament. DISEC’s first resolution, Resolution 1, created a new commission dedicated to understanding and regulating nuclear power and weapons. After this, the committee started working on functional resolutions that impacted global disarmament, such as Resolution 34/88, which set standards for negotiating disarmament, and Resolution 42/28, which describes the creation of a nuclear free zone in the Middle East.

More recently, DISEC has shifted its focus from weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear and chemical weapons to the more pervasive security issues in the world, namely the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons. The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) was the first ever binding UN document to address the conventional weapons trade and came into force as part of GA Resolution 67/234B in 2013. DISEC has also placed a strong emphasis on 2015’s Sustainable Development Goals. To solidify the role of the SDGs in DISEC’s work, the theme of the 71st DISEC session was “the Sustainable Development Goals: a Universal Push to Transform our World.”

Regarding disarmament, the United Nations—mainly through DISEC—has helped governments change their perspective from national interests to global interests by providing spaces to governments and civil society to come together and explore all viewpoints to develop sustainable cooperative solutions. Currently, countries are facing many issues that require the help of the international community ranging from climate threats, refugees, ocean protection, financial stability, and nuclear threats. However, global issues and perspectives have yet to be translated into a profound shift in national priorities required to deal with

2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Disarmament and International Security Council resolution 1, Establishment of a Commission to Deal with the Problems Raised by the Discovery of Atomic Energy, A/RES/1(I) (1 February 1946).
10 Ibid
these issues effectively.¹¹ Despite an obligation under the UN Charter to reduce military expenditure to fund social and economic needs (Article 26), governments continue to invest over USD 1.7 trillion annually in militaries.¹² DISEC has achieved a great deal of progress towards addressing these issues; however, member states must continue to cooperate so that international security can be strengthened.

¹¹ Ibid
¹² Ibid
Simulation

This simulation at NHSMUN 2020 will allow all delegates to participate equally in a vibrant debate. Delegates must thoroughly familiarize themselves with their country’s policies so that they can accurately represent them when the committee discusses each topic. The goal of this committee will be to build a consensus to support and pass a resolution that thoroughly addresses the topics under discussion, while also respecting the differing goals and opinions of all member states. With this goal in mind, delegates should develop and support resolutions that align with their country’s policies. Each country must work towards finding compromises without abandoning their own country’s goals in favor of the resolution. The resolutions should, therefore, aim to improve the situation while allowing each country to stay on policy and accomplish what their government believes is important.

To start committee, after delegates have been introduced to the dais, they will first debate the setting of the agenda and then progress to substantive debate, which will deepen and progress throughout the following sessions. There will be two main forms of discussion in this committee: formal debate and caucusing. Formal debate consists of delegates adding themselves to the speakers list to be formally recognized before the rest of the committee for a specified length of time. When delegates appear before the committee, it is their opportunity to give an overview of their country’s position. It is imperative that all delegates remain respectful of others during this time and observe all procedural rules in order for delegates to be heard and for the speaker’s list to flow smoothly. The chair will move down the speakers list, allowing each country who has volunteered their name to speak for a set amount of time and present their concerns to the committee.

Caucusing can be done in one of two ways: moderated and unmoderated. The speakers list will be suspended for both types of caucuses. Moderated caucuses flow similarly to formal debate, but delegates’ speaking times are often shorter, and each caucus has a specific topic that delegates must discuss in their comments. A moderated caucus will allow more speakers to address the assembly without having to wait for their turn to come on the speakers list. Unmoderated caucuses suspend formal rules of debate for a designated period of time during which delegates are free to move around the room and informally discuss policy and potential solutions with one another. The majority of writing for working papers and draft resolutions will occur during these unmoderated caucuses.

The topics in this committee are challenging and will require a great deal of research. Because NHSMUN emphasizes compromise and innovative problem solving, pre-written resolutions are not allowed at this conference. While your delegation may have some informal ideas about possible solutions before committee begins, you may not bring them to the conference in resolution form; this would defeat the purpose of the committee, which is to work together and compromise. Working papers and resolutions are collaboratively created by starting with solutions, first just as a set of ideas. These solutions are formatted into a working paper, then voted upon as draft resolutions, and finally presented as resolutions in plenary if passed in committee. Throughout this process and the debates, the dais staff will be available at all times to help delegates with any concerns or questions they may have. The dais is always happy to help delegates not only with substantive questions related to the topics under discussion, but also with adjusting to the procedural aspects of Model UN.

During the conference, the chair will be moderating the committee and setting up a general direction for the flow of debate. However, it is truly up to the delegates to decide how the committee proceeds, and it is up to the delegates to make the conference and committee the best that it can be. Delegates are welcome to contact the dais at any time for help, both before and during the conference, as they are there to answer any questions. They will help to make sure the committee runs smoothly and is a success.
TOPIC A:
ACHEIVING THE SDGS THROUGH DISARMAMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA
Introduction

Disarmament and development are two vital, mutually reinforcing processes needed for global sustainability. Disarmament is the effort to reduce weapons, generally within a certain region, in order to promote peace. According to the United Nations, development is “a multidimensional undertaking to achieve higher quality of life for all people.” According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), just 10% of today’s global military expenditure “would be enough to fund the global goals agreed upon by the United Nations’ 193 member states in September to end poverty and hunger by 2030.” Thus, it is evident that financial adjustments can be made within the international community to drastically improve the lives of people, especially in regions with high military conflicts, like the Middle East.

The Middle East and North Africa (together referred to as MENA) have experienced a myriad of conflicts over the past several decades amongst governments and terrorist organizations. Regardless of which countries or non-state actors are in conflict, these battles have pushed entire regions into poverty. This clear effect of war on economic stability and poverty shows how disarmament and development efforts are mutually reinforcing. Just as more violence leads to worsened conditions, less violence and less finances spent on war result in greater conditions for MENA.

Several sessions of the UN General Assembly and other international conferences have been dedicated to addressing the issues of global disarmament and development, including the 71st General Assembly. Though it is important to promote these meetings and conventions, one of the larger issues is the lack of representation of both women and smaller, less militarily-dominant countries. In MENA, women make up an average of just 17.5% of their national parliaments. Without providing an equal voice to women and ethnic minorities at these meetings, regardless of their power, the lack of socioeconomic development that results from war will not be effectively improved. Those with the least amount of voice are often the most affected by disarmament and development, especially within MENA, and equal representation is tantamount to their success.

The efforts to promote disarmament and development within MENA are clear examples of the UN working to achieve its Sustainable Development Goals, or the UN’s “blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.” Though it is crucial to represent one’s country and policy, it is also important for delegates to recognize that they are always working together to achieve the SDGs when debating and negotiating

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6 Ibid.
9 “Disarmament and Development,” Reaching Critical Will.
History and Description of Issue

Interdependence of Disarmament and Development

The topic of disarmament and development was most recently debated by the United Nations toward the end of 2018. As described by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Jayantha Dhanapala, a lack of development and the subsequent presence of poverty are large sources of violence and military conflict among different countries. Societies depend on disadvantaged citizens for military involvement, which is a cycle that inhibits larger social development. Rather than focusing on providing those experiencing poverty with the tools they need to thrive economically in a community, societies often underestimate their abilities. Thus, many people who could be contributing to development never have the opportunity. These patterns are particularly present in countries where the military recruits tend to be low-income citizens. For example, in the United States, the military often focuses on low-income high school students in its recruitment efforts. These students are often enticed to join because “for many, service with an honorable discharge can mean a free ride to college, or potentially a path to citizenship.” Furthermore, according to the 2016 Population Representation in the Military Services report, nearly 20% of US military members come from neighborhoods with median household incomes below USD 38,000. It is important to keep in mind that the median household income for 2016 was about USD 58,000. A similar trend also applies to other regions of the world, especially within MENA.

In MENA countries, people engaged in rebellion or violence are almost always from low-income communities, further displaying the unfortunate relationship between poverty and violence. Countries in MENA that have gone through the highest number of coup d’états are Chad, Comoros, Mauritania, and Sudan. In this particular region, there is a large economic disparity between political and military elites and the rest of the population. This “wealth gap” can make the most impoverished citizens feel like there are no opportunities available to them in the current regime, which can lead to an inclination to participate in or support violent political protests. In the early 2000s in Egypt, there was a booming number of college graduates looking for jobs, but a stagnant economy meant that there were not many job openings available. According to World Politics Review, “the result—duplicated to some degree across the Middle East and North Africa—is that Arab countries in 2010 had the highest youth unemployment rate in the world at almost 30%, with unemployment even higher among college graduates.” As a result, many young people began to criticize their government and look critically at its economic policies, leading to a newfound belief in radical ideologies that go against their countries deep rooted governmental rules and policies. Consequently, a potential youth-driven wave of political unrest was thus brewing from the early 2000s.
many MENA states, the countries facing development challenges see a directly correlated rise in citizen dissatisfaction, which could lead to conflict.

Research has shown that poverty is one of the main reasons why people join terrorist groups. According to the Institute for Security Studies, 27% of people who joined Al-Shabaab, an East African terrorist group, joined for economic reasons and an additional 25% joined for both religious and financial reasons. A lack of economic, political, and social opportunities has been a vital issue in a large portion of the regions where terrorist groups are most active. According to an interview conducted by the European Institute for Peace, this absence of opportunity “can lead to alienation, frustration, humiliation, and hopelessness.” The lack of an adequate economy is clearly reflected in terrorist organizations’ demographics, displaying the direct correlation between poverty and violence, as well as socioeconomic development and disarmament.

The connection is also shown through increases in military spending, resulting in far less funding being allocated towards decreasing poverty. Some argue that the humanitarian aid and regional stability provided by the military contribute to better development within a region. However, the large amounts of money and resources that must be spent on military training and fighting wars, as well as developing weapons and technology, may be more detrimental to the socioeconomic status of a country. Specifically, people in countries with wars and coup d'états experience double the risk of malnutrition and three times the chance of infant mortality compared to developing states at peace. As a result, some believe that government spending should have a better balance to ensure that both the military and societal development are stable.

Thus, whether it be through poverty causing people to fight and join the military or through a lack of proper balance in governmental spending, the connection between a lack of wealth and a presence of violence, as well as socioeconomic development and disarmament, is evident.

**Arms Trade Developments in the Middle East and North Africa**

The arms trade in MENA countries has drastically increased over the past several years as a result of the current political disputes in the region. As the constant flow of weaponry continues, so does conflict in the Middle East. Weapons often intentionally or unintentionally fall into the hands of dangerous groups, such as terrorists and insurgent militias.

According to a report released by SIPRI in 2019, arms trade to MENA states increased by 87% between both 2009-2013 and 2014-2018. During the latter period, the region was home to four of the ten largest arms-importing countries across the globe: Saudi Arabia received 33% of the region’s weaponry, Egypt received 15%, and the United Arab Emirates and Iraq both received 11%. Of those total arms transfers to the MENA region, the United States supplied 54% of the weapons, France supplied 8.6%, and Russia supplied 9.6%.

For the past several years, the US has been the largest contributor to the global flow of arms, especially in the Middle East, and was the top arms exporter from 2009 to 2018, exporting 36% of all arms traded between 2014 and 2018. Between both periods, its exports expanded by 29% and “its share of
total global exports rose from 30% to 36%. US weapons exports to the Middle East and North Africa grew by 134% over the course of nine years.49

According to SIPRI, one of the main reasons for this growth is the “mutual distrust between Iran on the one hand and Saudi Arabia and the UAE on the other.” Other causes include the civil war in Yemen, as well as hostile relations between Qatar and Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Because of these conflicts, Saudi Arabia became the largest arms importer in the world, with arms imports growing by 192% from 2009 to 2018.41 Furthermore, imports in Iraq, Qatar, and Egypt grew as well, increasing by 139%, 225%, and 206% respectively.42 From 2014-2018, Iraq and Egypt accounted for 36% and 46% of Russia’s exports to the Middle East respectively, making them the greatest receivers of Russian arms in the region.43 The overwhelming presence of military weapons in the Middle East not only stimulates more conflict, but also hinders the development in the area due to the aftermath of conflicts and the lack of allocated funds. These disputes result in a lack of funding for healthcare resources and leads to casualties and injuries in the conflict zones.

Not only has the arms trade from some of the world’s most dominant powers been used in state conflicts throughout the Middle East and North Africa, but it has also resulted in weapons falling into the hands of terrorist and rebel groups.44 In recent news, US weapons have been known to end up in insurgents’ possession. Specifically, the US made an agreement regarding arms trade with Saudi Arabia in 2017.45 It was a USD 110 billion deal in which Saudi Arabia pledged “to purchase tanks, fighter jets, combat ships and a sophisticated missile defense system.”46 While it is an official agreement between the two governments, the resulting flow of weapons between them is not necessarily properly regulated as they always have the chance to end up in the wrong hands. For instance, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, its main ally in the Yemen war, have been giving the American-made weapons to al-Qaeda, rebel militias, and other groups participating in the Yemen war.47 According to CNN, the two countries have used the “US-manufactured weapons as a form of currency to buy the loyalties of militias or tribes, bolster chosen armed actors, and influence the complex political landscape.”48

The result of such actions have harmed the lives of innocent civilians in the Middle East and North Africa, such as on 9 August 2018, when the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen bombed a school bus.49 The attack killed 51 people, 40 of whom were children, and injured 79 people, 56 of whom were children.50 CNN found that the bomb used by the coalition “was sold as part of a US State Department-sanctioned arms deal with Saudi Arabia.”51 According to ABC, the attack “galvanized opposition of America’s role in the five-year-old war [in Yemen]. But the Trump administration has remained a stalwart supporter of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and their military campaign against Houthi rebels in neighboring Yemen.”52

The weapons trade has been highly involved in conflicts in the Middle East, with many dominant world powers using their political motives to arm different groups in the region, resulting in innocent people being harmed on a daily basis.

38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 Wezeman, “Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2018.”
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
44 Elbagir, “Sold to an Ally, Lost to an Enemy.”
45 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
Socioeconomic Challenges in the Middle East and North Africa

As conflicts dominate parts of MENA, the resources necessary to improve the socioeconomic conditions have largely diminished, leaving much of the area in turmoil. Even if conflicts abate in MENA, a lack of gender and social class equality continues to stunt economic growth in the region. These factors must be improved if poverty overall is going to decrease in the Middle East.

Instead of using funds to alleviate poverty in the Middle East, many countries have chosen to dedicate their money towards defense spending. The Poverty and Shared Prosperity report, released by the World Bank in 2018, shows that MENA was the only region where the extreme poverty rate grew from 2011 to 2015, increasing two-fold. At the same time, from 2011-2014, MENA countries allocated a total of USD 163 billion towards military spending. Rather than using part of those funds to better socioeconomic conditions in the region, many countries continue to focus on increasing their military spending, a common trend seen globally with overall military expenditures rising 2.6% between 2017 and 2018 alone. In the US, for instance, its 2019 defense budget is set at USD 716 billion. This amount made up 17% of the year's total federal budget, whereas in 2016, the amount for foreign developmental aid accounted for only 1.2% of the budget. According to Borgen Magazine, “cutting military spending, even by just 5%, would add an additional USD 35.8 billion to foreign aid, which would more than double its current budget.”

Syria is a clear example of how conflict has taken a large toll on the living conditions of the Middle East. In 2011, Syria entered into a civil war as uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia, referred to as the Arab Spring, gripped the region. As a result of the war, Syria is still in turmoil with the conflict resulting in the deaths of around 500,000 people and the displacement of 13 million more who have escaped their homes since the conflict began.

In 2014, three years into the conflict, 82.5% of the Syrian population lived below the poverty line. The rate of extreme poverty, or the rate of a person living off of USD 1.90 or less, increased from 2011-2015 from nearly 0% up to 20%. Furthermore, as of 2017, the United States’ Central Intelligence Agency reported in June 2019 that Syria had an unemployment rate of 50% and that over 80% of people in Syria lived

53 “The Demographics Behind the Middle East’s ‘Youth-Driven Wave of Political Unrest,’” World Politics Review.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
It is important to note that even if the war ends in Syria, socioeconomic conditions in the region are not guaranteed to improve. Iraq’s conflict against the Islamic State (ISIL) was predominantly fought from 2014 to 2017. However, the poverty and economic turmoil caused by the conflict persists. According to a 2018 report released by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), one in four Iraqi children live in poverty and there are “four million in need of assistance as a direct result of the war.” Thus, more steps must be taken in the Middle East to better the development of the region and ensure security for the lives of those impacted by these disputes.

One of the largest challenges to producing a thriving society and economy in all countries in MENA is the lack of economic and gender equality in the area. Currently, the poorest 20% of the population in MENA only holds 6.8% of the entire income share. Furthermore, the income gap between the poorest and wealthiest of the region is quite significant at 38.2% between them. This inequality is not only critical because it indicates that a large portion of the Middle Eastern population is struggling to earn a proper living, but it also

65 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
causes a reduction in economic growth. Specifically, studies show that a 1% increase in income inequality would result in a 0.57% decrease in economic growth and a 0.78% increase in poverty.\textsuperscript{70}

Gender inequality has also had a large role in the lack of economic and developmental growth in the Middle East. Currently, women in the region have much less educational and occupational opportunities than men and are believed to be of a lower social status. To investigate, the International Men and Gender Equality Survey conducted a study that surveyed 10,000 people between the ages of 18 and 59.\textsuperscript{71} The results found that, “in reply to almost all questions, men had more regressive attitudes towards equality than women.” Specifically, in Egypt, over 90% of men agreed that “a man should have the final word about [the decisions] in the home.”\textsuperscript{72} This prejudice towards women in the Middle East extends beyond just men, with the same report finding that 58.5% of women also agreed with the statement.\textsuperscript{73} Thus, it is evident that gender equality is not heavily emphasized in MENA, often due to cultural differences or governmental restriction of personal beliefs.

This gender mindset has caused a lack of economic opportunities for women, not only reducing their potential but also hindering regional development. In Yemen, for instance, according to the 2011 UNICEF Gender Equality Profile, the labor force participation rate of women aged fifteen and older was just 20%.\textsuperscript{74} In comparison, the participation was 74% for men of the same age.\textsuperscript{75} Furthermore, in Egypt, the unemployment rate among female youth aged fifteen to 24 was as high as 48% compared to just 17% for male youth.\textsuperscript{76} Educational opportunities, specifically in secondary school, must be improved in the region to better the lives of women. According to the International Finance Corporation, “[a] one percentage point increase in female education leads to a massive .37 percentage point increase in a country’s gross domestic product.”\textsuperscript{77} Thus, as equality begins to improve, developmental progress can also be made in the region. With MENA increasing defense spending, it is clear that developmental progress can be achieved in part through disarmament measures and policy changes that encourage additional funds for the purpose of socioeconomic development at the expense of military expenditures.

**Development Potential in the Middle East and North Africa**

While decades of conflict have left a wake of turmoil, the significant development potential that resides in the Middle East has not faltered. With the necessary funding, education, and infrastructure, the region has the capability to prosper within the global community.\textsuperscript{78}

Currently, about two-thirds of the population in the Middle East is under the age of 30, and thus potential for technological and overall economic advancements in the region is promising.\textsuperscript{79} Between 2017 and 2020, 60 million new jobs have been created in order to account for the booming youth population.\textsuperscript{80} Future youth job prospects look promising with Arab economist Khalid Abdallah Janahi stating that “investments in youth are the most promising in efforts to achieve stability and social justice.”\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{70} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{73} Lyons, “Majority of Men in Middle East Survey Believe a Woman’s Place is in the Home.”


\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
To ensure that enough jobs are available for the youth, different markets have been growing in the Middle East. Renewable energy, specifically, has been a major focus for the region, expanding tremendously over the past several years. According to a report created by the International Renewable Energy Agency, solar photovoltaic (PV) technology is now considered the most competitive form of power generation within the Persian Gulf. Furthermore, the research also showed that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), an economic and political coalition of six Middle Eastern countries, intends to install a total of nearly seven gigawatts of new power generation capacity from renewable sources by the start of the 2020s. Plus, in Abu Dhabi alone, 7% of its energy capacity is expected to be from renewable energy by 2020.

The expansion of new forms of energy has the potential to provide more occupations for people in the Middle East. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), solar and wind power will account for about 60% of the electricity supply in the Middle East by 2050. The IAEA estimates a total of around 155,000 direct and 115,000 indirect jobs will result from the new source of energy, many of which will be available for those living in the region. This increased job security will help reduce poverty and in turn, help build long term stability.

This increased integration of renewable energy also better the environment. Currently, the GCC countries are within the highest fourteen per-capita emitters of carbon dioxide across the globe. Thus, their increased usage of renewable energy will reduce their carbon footprint and improve the environment and air quality for all of their citizens. More renewable energy also means that countries in the Middle East can reduce their focus on exporting oil and gas. The Middle East represents 65% of the world’s oil reserves and has the largest concentration of giant and supergiant oil fields globally. When political tensions rise in the region, oftentimes countries place sanctions on Middle Eastern oil exports. Thus, the expansion of renewable energy in the region will allow for more financial stability in the region, in spite of any political events that may be occurring at the time.

Another area of growth in the Middle East has been the increase in start-up companies. According to Magnitt, a start-up data platform, the number of people investing in MENA-based start-ups increased more than two-fold from 2015 to 2018. Furthermore, a Bloomberg article noted that in 2017, Arab entrepreneurs raised over USD three billion in technology investments in the Persian Gulf region, breaking all previous records. One highly successful company is named Jamalon, a site which offers over twelve million books (150,000 of which are in Arabic) and provides a self-publishing book service. According to Vox, “The company has been referred to as the Amazon of the Middle East, but that label doesn’t quite do it justice.”

83 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
87 Ibid.
90 “Renewable Energy in the Gulf.”
91 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
Evidently, the Middle East has vast potential for developmental growth. Though political conflicts persist in the region, the socioeconomic capabilities of the Middle East are still great if the proper resources are allocated towards its development.

**Increasing the Role of Developing States in Disarmament**

Developing countries are largely underrepresented in discussions regarding disarmament and development, not only diminishing their voices but skewing global policy on various issues. According to Article 36, a research-based non-profit organization in the United Kingdom, “Lower income countries are less likely to attend, speak at, or hold formal roles in multilateral meetings on disarmament and weapons issues.”

Even if these countries do end up being present at meetings, they have much smaller delegations than their more developed counterparts. Furthermore, developing countries have a much smaller chance of being members of forums or treaties regarding disarmament. These meetings, treaties, and forums thus often fail to take into account the voices of the countries most affected by the issues these meetings seek to address.

There are many reasons why developing countries do not have the opportunity to have an equal voice in these forums, one of which is their locations. According to Article 36, out of 82 United Nations meetings, 75 of them took place in the “global north” which is comprised of developed countries. The location of these discussions rarely allows those affected most by issues regarding disarmament and development to host and lead meetings which, in turn, often results in developing countries expressing their voices less.

Low-income countries were the least likely to attend meetings held in developed countries. When forums were held in the global south, low-income countries had the highest attendance rate out of all members. Therefore, there must be some adjustments in the international community to ensure that policy decisions regarding disarmament are effectively made by all countries, regardless of income.

In addition, developing countries are known to have smaller delegations at UN discussions, having an average of 2.8 people in comparison to an average of 4.5 people for high-income countries. This inequality of representation makes it more difficult for these countries to have as strong of an influence as higher-income countries. For instance, oftentimes meetings regarding different issues or even meetings regarding one particular issue are held at the same exact time, or much too close to one another. This was specifically shown in regard to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. As put by a representative from a lower-middle income country, “as well as having to miss formal sessions, [...] having a small delegation meant that informal engagements such as bilateral meetings and consultations were missed too.” These informal engagements, “were described as often the most important parts of a meeting for decision-making and the development of initiatives.”

This difficulty for lower-income countries was especially shown by the fact that the ratio of low-income NPT parties who made a statement at UN meetings from 2010-2014 regarding non-proliferation was at an average of 1% among all 55 states participating. When meetings are held multiple times a week, for instance, smaller delegations also have difficulty being present consistently.

UK-based non-profit Article 36 analyzed thirteen UN forums.

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96 “Disarmament and Development,” *Article 36*.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid.
103 Ibid.
104 Ibid.
105 Ibid.
106 Ibid.
107 Ibid.
109 Ibid.
Its study observed that on average, “the lower a country’s income group, the less likely they were to be a member of any given treaty or process covered.” Furthermore, wealthier countries also signed on treaties quicker than lower-income countries. Continued underrepresentation of developing countries will not only hurt those countries, but the international community as a whole with regards to participating in diplomatic negotiations and agreements.

**Combating Gender Inequalities in Disarmament and Development**

Inequalities also exist along gender lines as well. Women are constantly underrepresented in meetings and discussions, especially when they involve issues of security and disarmament. Currently, in any intergovernmental meeting regarding disarmament, only about 25% of the attendees are expected to be women. In smaller forums of 100 participants or less, the average percentage of female participants is just 20%. Among the UN General Assembly committees, DISEC has the lowest number of women. In comparison, the GA Committees with the largest proportion of women are humanitarian committees. While it is essential that women play a leading role in combating humanitarian crises globally, their roles in security discussions are just as important.

A specific example of women lacking a necessary voice in disarmament discussions was the debate over nuclear weapons. Adopted by the General Assembly in July 2017, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was a significant stride in UN history toward the reduction of weapons of mass destruction worldwide. While the country delegations attended the treaty-signing convention as a way to represent the lives of all people, a large portion of the world’s population was largely underrepresented. At treaty negotiations, just 31% of delegates were women, and women gave just 29% of country statements during the discussions. Additionally, only 3% of delegations were all women.

Many feel that this lack of representation stems from society’s perception of women as “vulnerable victims” who need protection rather than agents possessing the ability to provide protection for others. This has often resulted in a lack of trust in women to make decisions regarding security issues that involve more than humanitarian aspects of a war or conflict.

**Current Status**

**Case Study: Escalating Tensions in the Middle East**

Over the past several years, conflicts within the Middle East have become more and more frequent as rebel groups emerge, protesters challenge their government, and foreign countries get involved in the region. Consequently, more money is diverted to security and military projects at the expense of humanitarian and infrastructure projects. Delegates should focus on the recent history of wars in the Middle East, because the policies of the countries involved in these disputes will shape their policies on the topic of disarmament and development.

One of the most recent events pertaining to the Middle East is...
the conflict between Iran and the United States. Tensions have been escalating between both countries since the US withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal in 2018, but tensions have become especially concerning over the past several months.122

In July 2015, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (China, France, Russia, the UK, and the US) and Germany entered into an agreement with Iran formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).123 The aim of the deal was to limit Iran’s nuclear weapons development so it would only have enough enriched uranium for its energy needs and not enough to develop a weapon.124 In exchange for its compliance, the economic sanctions on Iran, which have caused the country to lose billions of dollars in oil revenue, were lifted.125 After two years of difficult negotiations, the countries eventually came to an agreement.126

Even before taking office, US President Donald Trump made his opposition to the deal well known. He stated, “It is clear to me that we cannot prevent an Iranian nuclear bomb under the decaying and rotting structure of the current agreement. The Iran deal is defective at its core. If we do nothing we know exactly what will happen.”127 When the US unilaterally withdrew from the agreement, Iran was not the only country that was upset; allies France, Germany, and the UK were strongly against Trump’s decision as well.128

Over the past several months, tensions have escalated between the two countries. On 13 July 2019, two tankers were attacked near the Strait of Hormuz.129 The strait is a crucial

shipping route that has been a source of conflict in the area for years, especially considering that around 30% of the global sea-borne crude oil sails through its waters.130 According to CNN, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo “blamed Iran for the attacks, saying the assessment was based on intelligence but offered no evidence to support his claim.”131 Iran denied all allegations.132

On 20 July 2019, Iran shot down a US military drone, which the Iran Revolutionary Guard referred to as an “intruding American spy drone.”133 Both Iran and the US have been debating the location in which the drone was attacked: Iran says it was shot it down in Iranian territory, and the US says it was in international airspace.134 In response to the event, the head of the Revolutionary Guard Corps, Maj. Gen. Hossein Salami, exclaimed, “[t]he downing of the American drone is an open, clear and categorical message, which is: the defenders of the borders of Iran will decisively deal with any foreign aggression. This is the way the Iranian country deals with its enemies.” He continued that Iran does “not want war with any country, but we are completely and totally ready and prepared for war.”135

These recent occurrences and escalating tensions in Iran are just one example of the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East. As these disputes continue, debates take place over which countries should or should not disarm their weapons of mass destruction, and why some countries need the ammunition to defend themselves.136 As a result, the longer these conflicts last, the less focus the international community spends on de-

123 Ibid.
124 Ibid.
126 Ibid.
128 Haltiwanger, “Here’s What’s in the Landmark Nuclear Deal that Iran just Violated Amid Tensions with Trump.”
130 Ibid.
131 Ibid.
132 Ibid.
136 A/71/152, “Relationship Between Disarmament and Development: Report of the Secretary-General.”
Lack of safe drinking water in Yemen.

**Case Study: Cholera Epidemic in Yemen Amid Civil War**

As the civil war in Yemen rages on, arms continue to flow into the country while hundreds of thousands of civilians suffer from famine and disease. Yemen’s civil war first broke out in 2014, when Houthi rebels seized the capital and demanded for a new regime and lower fuel prices. Since then, conflict has persisted between the insurgents and the government, which has allowed other non-state actors to install themselves across the country.

As the civil war continues, Yemeni people have been put in harm’s way, whether it be through the weapons being used, a lack of necessary resources, or even through the spread of fatal diseases.

One such example is the alarming outbreak of cholera across the country. In 2019 alone, the country has suffered a total of 439,812 suspected cholera cases; 203,000 of which were children. In addition, at least 193 children have passed away just this year, which is nine times higher than the number of deaths that occurred in 2018. According to Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), from January to March 2019, “the number of suspected or confirmed cholera patients increased from 140 to 2,000 per week.”

The epidemic is continuing to grow, and the current conditions of the country are only making the situation worse.

Children who are malnourished are highly susceptible to cholera-related illnesses. The current conflict in Yemen has devastated much of the sanitation infrastructure in the region, resulting in about 9.2 million children who lack access to clean water. In addition, there is a lack of fuel available, which means that garbage collection and sewage pumping has become less frequent. These conditions have resulted in much of Yemen becoming “a breeding ground for infectious and water borne diseases such as cholera.” The lack of food and clean water paired with these infectious living conditions have made malnourished children especially vulnerable to the disease. According to Save the Children, these children are at least three times more likely to die if they develop cholera.

Furthermore, health systems in Yemen are largely faltering. According to Tamer Kirolos, Save the Children’s Country Director in Yemen, “disease outbreaks are now rife due to the collapse of the health system and weak sanitation systems and a population made increasingly vulnerable by forced displacement and malnutrition. The health system is under considerable stress, with only half of the health facilities functional while the remaining facilities are closed or partially functional.”

The lack of necessary health resources is espe-
cially critical at the current moment due to the fact that health difficulties as a result of conflicts are still highly prevalent, all while the rainy season is approaching. Researchers say that the difficult weather will result in “an escalation in the outbreak,” seeing that there has already been floods and heavier rain is likely to spread the waterborne illness.  

Another issue seen in Yemen is that the doctors and nurses treating cholera patients are often underpaid and forced to work in poor conditions. One hospital in Yemen is called Al-Thawra, the biggest referral hospital in Yemen’s capital Sana’a.  

An Al Jazeera reporter who stayed at the hospital for several days with her mother who had contracted the disease praised the work of the medical staff at the hospital. She said, “The people who made that miracle happen were the medical staff, who despite all the difficulties and dangers of their work, did their jobs with great devotion.” The hospital had staff twenty-four hours a day, and nurses worked twelve-hour shifts for a little as USD 250 per month. With a minimum of five people suspected of having cholera entering the ward each day, “their work did not seem to slow down.” Despite their evident hard and dangerous work, the staff are severely underfunded.

Given the current circumstances, the UN considers Yemen to be “the world’s worst man-made humanitarian crisis.” Cholera is not the only health concern in the region; relief officials have stated that 24 million people, or about 80% of the Yemen population, are in need of aid and security.

Development comes successfully when resources are available for all, institutions are properly functioning, and the environment is sustainable. Two goals in particular that relate to the topic at hand are Goal 1: No Poverty and Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being. Protecting the lives of all people and ensuring that they have the ability to live sustainably is crucial globally. In order for countries to properly develop, especially where conflict is rampant, destitution must be dealt with im-

148 Ibid.
151 Ibid.
152 Ibid.
153 Ibid.
154 Gladstone, “Cholera, Lurking Symptom of Yemen’s War, Appears to Make Roaring Comeback.”
155 Ibid.
157 Ibid.
159 Ibid.
mediately. Many regions in the Middle East have underfunded health services in places that need it most. Countries and non-governmental organizations must therefore work to develop the necessary resources and institutions to better the well-being of all.

To efficiently promote the prosperity of those in MENA countries, delegates should also closely examine Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. As previously discussed, people in poor economic conditions are often more inclined to take up arms, so creating good jobs is a way to reduce the number of people engaged in violence. Others have contracted illnesses that were poorly treated due to a lack of financial means to fund medical support. Thus, a crucial step within MENA countries is to provide jobs and a way for economic growth in the region. Whether it be through the advancement of technology or the development of renewable energy, the area has the potential to financially prosper for its people.

Furthermore, regardless of any development efforts made in MENA countries, the socioeconomic conditions of the region will be held down by ongoing conflicts. Therefore, countries must also work to achieve Goal 16: Peace, Justice and

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161 Ibid.
162 “NGOs, IGOs: Lebanon and the Middle East” American University of Beirut, accessed 14 July 2019, aub.edu.lb.libguides.com/e.php?g=276479&pg=1843038.
163 “Sustainable Development Goals.”
164 “The Demographics Behind the Middle East’s Youth-Driven Wave of Political Unrest,” World Politics Review.
165 “War in Yemen.”
166 Anderson, “Renewable Energy on the Rise in the Middle East.”
Strong Institutions. The global community must unite to ensure that violent actors are held accountable and that the rule of law is implemented fairly. For peace and development to be achieved in the region, conflict must first be reduced, and disarmament is a significant means to accomplish this.

Bloc Analysis

Points of Division

The degree to which a country produces and stockpiles weapons, as well as its involvement in conflict, are the main factors that will determine blocs for this committee. Countries that produce and export weapons are likely to advocate for peace, but may not support restrictions on the arms trade, even when it would divert funding towards development. Countries currently engaged in ongoing military conflicts may have a similar policy stance as those with high weapons production, because they feel a need for more weapons in order to properly defend their citizens. Post-conflict countries are likely to support disarmament and development. Not only do they need fewer weapons because they are recovering from conflict rather than at the climax of it, but they also likely have a significant, immediate need for development funding in the wake of devastating conflict. Whether improving the government institutions, health systems, or financial markets, these countries are likely to take a firm stance on supporting disarmament and development globally to better the conditions in their region.

When reading these bloc descriptions, it is important to note that certain countries may fall into more than one of these bloc categories. In this case, delegates should focus on the blocs that align most with their country’s policy in regard to disarmament and development.

Countries with Highest Weapons Production

The global arms trade has drastically increased over the past several years. According to SIPRI, the amount of international major arms transfers was 23% higher in 2014-2018 than in 2004-2008. As conflicts increase across the world, especially within the Middle East, certain countries with the necessary resources to develop more weaponry have started mass producing armaments. They export these weapons for a profit to countries that do not have the same arms development capabilities. The flow of armaments to different countries is also largely tied to global political divisions. Often, more developed countries will allocate more military funding and resources to a conflict that does not directly relate to their own territory, but instead to the territories of their allies. Once these actions are taken by one world power, others act similarly, creating and escalating more ongoing disputes globally.

According to SIPRI, the United States, Russia, France, Germany, and China were the five largest arms exporters in 2014-2018. Other countries with high rates of arms production include the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Israel, and the Netherlands. As mentioned previously, the US is especially known for its large flow of weaponry to the Middle East. Over the past several years, the US has been the largest contributor to the global flow of arms to the region. Out of all countries, the US was the top arms exporter in both 2009-2013 and 2014-2018. Between both time periods, its exports expanded by 29%, and “its share of total global exports rose from 30% to 36%.”

167 “Sustainable Development Goals.”
168 Wezeman, “Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2018.”
169 Ibid.
170 Ibid.
171 Ibid.
172 Ibid.
173 Ibid.
174 Ibid.
176 Wezeman, “Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2018.”
177 Ibid.
178 Ibid.
179 Ibid.
The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is also a major arms producer. This is due to the absence of information describing the military technology in the region. Nonetheless, North Korea should still be considered one of the top global producers of military weapons. The Council on Foreign Affairs describes that “North Korea has one of the world’s largest conventional military forces, which, combined with its missile and nuclear tests and aggressive rhetoric, has aroused concern worldwide.” Furthermore, the country spends approximately 25% of its GDP on military development.

Regarding disarmament and development, each of these countries are some of the largest contributors to the flow of arms across the globe and especially in the Middle East. Thus, though many of these countries recognize the importance of peaceful rather than violent engagements, they generally do not support disarmament when it comes to their own militaries and arms trade. These countries can focus on finding a balance to maintain their strong military capabilities while also working on bettering the socioeconomic conditions of lower-income and post-conflict regions globally.

Countries Suffering Ongoing Conflict

Across the globe, there are many countries experiencing conflicts with terrorist organizations, other countries, or internal factions. When discussing disarmament and development in committee, these countries will fall under this bloc.

The Council on Foreign Relations hosts the Global Conflict Tracker, which evaluates which countries globally are currently experiencing disputes. Currently, the countries facing the most significant conflicts include Afghanistan, Mexico, Venezuela, Nigeria, Egypt, Ukraine, Iraq, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, and Pakistan. These countries experience firsthand the choices that must be made between security funding and development funding, and should play a significant role in the committee’s debate. Certain countries believe they need to have weapons and be armed in order to protect their people from outside threats. Others are trying to invest in development as a means to reduce conflict. However, the circumstances that these countries face unite their policies.

For instance, the conflict with insurgent groups in eastern Ukraine has led to dramatically increased tensions between Ukraine and Russia. During the 71st session of the General Assembly, Ukraine explained that while they “[understand] the importance of redirecting the expenditures from military to civil purposes” due to the ongoing aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and its temporary occupation of the territory of Ukraine” they are unfortunately “not in a position to fulfil such endeavours…While [Russia] constantly violates and neglects the core international principles and norms and poses a threat to Ukraine, we have no other choice but to strengthen its military capabilities.” Thus, especially as a country with ongoing military conflict, it is crucial for delegates to understand their policies in regard to disarmament and development. These disputes directly impact the amount of funding governments choose to spend on military versus development and play a large role in determining how the international community should approach this issue moving forward.

Post-Conflict Countries

A post-conflict country is defined by IGI Global as a “country that has achieved a peaceful resolution to a protracted civil war and where governmental, non-governmental, and inter-
national institutions attempt to assist in stabilizing the political, economic, military, and social structures through a host of reconstruction projects.”¹⁹² This includes many diverse countries around the world, most of which rely on international aid to better their socioeconomic and political conditions.¹⁹³ It is especially crucial to identify which UN members are of this status when it comes to the topic of disarmament and development, because these countries have come to some sort of conclusion to the main dispute that has been occurring in the region and are now focusing on reconstruction and development.¹⁹⁴ Thus, many of these countries need the largest amount of funding and resources and are in favor of some sort of disarmament policy in order to achieve the stability they are looking for.¹⁹⁵

Post-conflict countries include but are not limited to Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Guinea-Bissau, Central African Republic, and Afghanistan.¹⁹⁶ Each of these countries were listed by the World Bank in its Harmonized List of Fragile Situations for 2019. Countries perceived as fragile are countries that “suffer from sub-national conflict or other factors which affect fragility” according to the World Bank.¹⁹⁷ The countries listed above all also have had both political and peacebuilding missions within their borders in the last three years.¹⁹⁸ Libya is an example of what post-conflict concerns look like. In 2011, Libya experienced a revolution which resulted in two
separate governments: the Government of National Accord and the Tobruk Administration. Though the country has a form of governmental structure in place as a result of the revolution, there are still parts of it that are in great need of development. According to the International Organization for Migration, as of October, there were approximately 200,000 people who were still internally displaced in Libya. In addition, there are large systematic issues with the prison system in the country. According to the Human Rights Watch, from their 2019 world report on Libya, “prison authorities, [...] continued to hold thousands of detainees in long-term arbitrary detention without charges.” Due to the conflicting views of the two governments, guards often view detainees as enemies rather than just prisoners. Thus, the protocol within the prison system may be altered due to personal biases. The facilities themselves are often in poor condition as well, having significant overcrowding, deficient sanitation, and inadequate health services. Post-conflict countries such as Libya are therefore in need of social, political, and economic assistance and thus strongly believe in increasing development in their regions.

It is crucial for delegates in this bloc to recognize how the perspective of their countries can help shape and guide debate as they have direct experiences with how conflict results in difficult living conditions for their people.

Committee Mission

The purpose of the First Committee is to debate “disarmament, nonproliferation, arms control, and international security issues, recommending resolutions and decisions for adoption by the plenary session of the [United Nations General Assembly].” One of the potential topics delegates will be debating, “Achieving the SDGs through Disarmament in the Middle East and North Africa,” follows the mandate set by DISEC. Focusing on disarmament and development of the people residing in the Middle East, this topic not only addresses security but also highlights the socioeconomic factors that both play into and come as a result of armed conflict. Thus, delegates should not only focus on debating nonproliferation, but should also focus on how proliferation affects the living conditions of those in the Middle East and those across the globe.

In addition, delegate should strive to follow the same standards upheld by the First Committee in the United Nations. The main goal of the committee during debate will be to promote peace and security across the international community by engaging in discussions. While discussing, delegates must defend the policies of their countries, as they are acting as the representatives for those countries. However, it is also important to remember that while delegates are defending their policies, they must also maintain their diplomacy and remember the purpose of the United Nations. The goal of this session will be for members of DISEC to negotiate and understand the perspectives of other countries regarding disarmament and development in order to come to solutions that can benefit the international community as a whole.


202 Ibid.

203 Ibid.


205 Ibid.

206 Ibid.

207 A/71/152, “Relationship Between Disarmament and Development: Report of the Secretary-General.”


209 A/71/152, “Relationship Between Disarmament and Development: Report of the Secretary-General.”
TOPIC B:
REGULATING THE USE OF PRIVATE MILITARY CONTRACTORS
**Introduction**

Private military contractors (PMCs) have proliferated rapidly since the postcolonial and post-Cold War era, taking on contracts in nearly every corner of the world. They go by many names, including private military companies (PMCs), private military and security companies (PMSCs), private security providers (PSPs), or corporate security firms (CSFs), but their goals are the same: provide security solutions for a cost. The global security contractor industry is now estimated to be worth more than USD 200 billion and employs more than one million people. While most PMCs claim to offer strictly non-combat services, such as military advice, training, logistic support, demining, and peace operations monitoring, they can occupy such a crucial role within national militaries that the “distinction between combat and non-combat operations is often artificial,” as the PMCs may further involve themselves in combat situations.

Thus, PMCs often go beyond the Third Geneva Convention’s recognition of “persons who accompany the armed forces without being members thereof, such as […] supply contractors, members of labor units or of services responsible for the welfare of the armed forces.” They serve roles such as defending key locations in conflict zones, escorting convoys through enemy territory, and protecting very important persons. PMCs may be hired by the public sector—such as governments and national armed forces—or the private sector, such as individuals, corporations, and other non-state actors (NSAs).

While their names, purposes, and employers may vary, PMCs have faced mounting criticism in the past two decades for transparency and accountability issues, their violation of human rights and destabilization of the rule of law; and their breach of the rules of conflict under the Geneva Conventions as unlawful combatants. For example, contractors employed by Blackwater Worldwide, a PMC hired by the United States to defend personnel in Iraq, were responsible for the September 2007 Nisour Square Massacre, in which seventeen civilians were killed and twenty were wounded after the contractors opened fire. In addition, contractors from CACI—a company performing linguistics and interrogation work for the United States in Iraq—were involved in the brutal torture of prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison, where interrogators were complicit in “having ‘instigated’ and ‘encouraged’ the abuse as well as participating in it, and aiding to cover it up.” While such cases are horrifying in and of themselves, many of the perpetrators of criminal activity and human rights violations under the employment of PMCs often avoid legal responsibility due to a combination of their undefined legal status, the lack of national and international law, and the absence of regulation, accountability, and transparency.

Moreover, PMCs pose a threat to the right to self-determination of peoples as well as the national sovereignty of states since they can be hired by “governments, opposition groups, or militias.”

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domestic resistance movements or criminal organizations” to topple legitimate governments and destabilize other countries. According to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres: “The presence of mercenaries and other foreign fighters worsens conflict and threatens stability. Some mercenaries go from war to war, plying their deadly trade with enormous firepower, little accountability and a complete disregard for international humanitarian law.”

Regardless of these serious international humanitarian concerns, PMCs continue to sign multimillion dollar contracts with states and NSAs alike as military operations and security services become increasingly privatized. Employers of PMCs include the United States, Saudi Arabia, the Saudi Royal Family, Sierra Leone, NATO, China, Russia, Yemen, and even the UN. As the industry continues to grow and becomes increasingly tied to international conflicts and militaries, delegates will discuss how to address the rapid emergence of PMCs and ensure that their role in future conflicts is lawful and just.

**History and Description of the Issue**

PMCs are now a reality of modern warfare, often serving vital roles for not only logistical and security purposes, but also offensive combat operations. Although the PMC industry has witnessed meteoric growth, international legal regimes and regulations regarding their use have lagged behind, resulting in a legal gap in which “violations of human rights can occur without account or fair and proper remedy, as is required under international human law.” Consequently, the unclear legal status of PMCs has led to a severe lack of accountability and transparency which, in turn, has permitted violations of human rights, national sovereignties, and the right of self-determination to occur with very few repercussions. Moreover, the existence and expansion of PMCs also has implications for private security, warfare, interventionism, and conflict resolution.

**History of Mercenaries and the Development of Private Military Companies**

Although PMCs are a contemporary phenomenon, mercenaries are certainly not. The evolution of ancient mercenaries into modern-day military contractors was in response to shifts in how war is conducted and recent historical events; the success of PMCs today can only be explained through this history. According to the UN General Assembly Resolution 44/34 International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, the official UN definition of a mercenary is—among other conditions—any person who is “motivated to take part in the hostilities essentially by the desire for private gain and [...] is promised [...] material compensation, [...] is neither a member of a party to the conflict nor a resident of territory controlled by a party to the conflict, [and] is not a member of the armed forces of a party to the conflict.”

It is strongly advised that delegates carefully read the full definition, which is found in Article 1.

Mercenaries have been employed in conflicts around the world since the beginning of warfare itself, with early uses dating back to 1294 BCE. Although the industry fell into decline throughout most of the 19th and 20th centuries, mer-
Mercenaries rebounded during the latter half of the 20th century, laying the foundations for modern PMCs. Beginning with the Congo Crisis and lasting throughout the 1960s to the 1980s, mercenaries began to reappear throughout the postcolonial world, covertly operating as individuals or in small groups. Usually hired by former colonizers, these soldiers were hired guns who mainly fought against African self-determination movements or took advantage of civil strife. This re-emergence was not only a product of the new volatile international situation, but also of another shift in warfare as conflicts became more urban and asymmetrical. Soldiers no longer maintain rank and file in a field or crouch in trenches; they fight technologically inferior enemies who resort to unconventional tactics and contemporary insurgencies who have no distinctive armaments or uniform. Thus, the modern infantryman must maximize their reaction speed and technological expertise to succeed. In addition, they must work together in small groups in urban settings as opposed to the large-scale total war invasions seen in the past. Modern warfare therefore requires specialized and highly trained military personnel.

New international politics also play a role in the return of postcolonial mercenaries. On average, the size of militaries have decreased since the start of the 20th century. This is, in part, due to the fact that maintaining a large modern standing army is incredibly costly, and grows even more expensive every year. France, with has the world's fourth-largest defense budget, has still greatly reduced the scale of its military since World War II. According to the US Department of Defense, it cost USD 2,600 (adjusted for inflation) to equip one infantryman during World War II. Today, infantry equipment costs nearly USD 20,000, and the cost is expected to rise further. Since the end of the Cold War, this reshaping of military policy and budget, combined with a general trend of economic privatization, has created "an important and lucrative international security private sector." Once again, specialized and highly trained military units have become indispensable and mercenaries offer a shortcut to acquiring trained militaries in lieu of maintaining an unnecessarily large standing army.

However, it is crucial to note that postcolonial mercenaries are quite different from contemporary PMCs. The international response was plentiful with regard to these mercenaries; the UN and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) declared their intentions to regulate mercenaries in the 1960s, Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions was updated in 1977 to define and discourage individual mercenarism, and the aforementioned International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries was entered into force in 2001. PMCs evolved from mercenaries after this international policy response to covert individual work, developing complex and public professional companies instead to offer various combat and non-combat services. Peter Singer divides the current industry into three business sectors:

“(i) military provider firms supplying “direct, tactical military assistance” that can include serving in frontline combat; (ii) military consulting firms that provide strategic advice and training; and (iii) military support forms that provide logistics, maintenance and intelligence services to armed forces.”

PMCs made serious breakthroughs during the 1990s with companies like Executive Outcomes (EO), which was among the first corporations to market combat-ready troops for offensive work. Consisting primarily of former South African special forces from the apartheid regime, EO success—
fully suppressed Revolutionary United Front rebels in Sierra Leone and the UNITA rebels in Angola much faster than the government forces.\textsuperscript{30} In Sierra Leone, 250 EO contractors suffered fewer than 20 casualties while actively engaging an enemy force of 15,000, fulfilling their contract within 21 months.\textsuperscript{31} However, EO’s compliance with international humanitarian law was questionable; the corporation employed cluster bombs and fuel air explosives, and EO commanders reportedly told their pilots to just “kill everybody.”\textsuperscript{32} According to Lindsey Cameron of the International Review of the Red Cross, herein lies the issue with regulating PMCs since “[the] fact that these companies are perceived as efficient may pose a challenge for those who defend international humanitarian law, which does not prioritize efficiency above all else.”\textsuperscript{33}

The new industry focus has shifted to logistical support, training, and physical security; many firms now avoid the term “military contractors” in favor of “providers of national security solutions,” “security services,” or “delivering services to support the missions of defense and governmental agencies.”\textsuperscript{34} States have now become the primary employer of PMCs, and former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan considered the possibility of hiring PMCs for the UN in 1998 but stated that “the world may not be ready to privatize peace.”\textsuperscript{35} Nonetheless, the UN has become an employer for PMCs due to security needs, and they developed the UN Security Management System in 2012 for safer and more coherent PMC hiring practices.\textsuperscript{36} However, UN agencies fail to offer transparency into contracting practices with PMCs.\textsuperscript{37}

International Legal Status

The lack of regulation for the PMC industry is a byproduct of their undefined international legal status, particularly their sta-

\textsuperscript{30} Cameron, “Private Military Companies: Their Status Under International Humanitarian Law and Its Impact on Their Regulation,” 576.
\textsuperscript{31} Maher, “How to Kill in the 21st Century: The Resurgence of Mercenaries on the Battlefield,” 19.
\textsuperscript{32} Cameron, “Private Military Companies: Their Status Under International Humanitarian Law and Its Impact on Their Regulation,” 576.
\textsuperscript{33} Cameron, “Private Military Companies: Their Status Under International Humanitarian Law and Its Impact on Their Regulation.”
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} Åse Gilje Østensen, UN Use of Private Military and Security Companies (Geneva: The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2006), 6; Mohamad Ghazi Janaby, The Legal Regime Applicable to Private Military and Security Personnel in Armed Conflicts (Geneva: Springer International Publishing Switzerland, 2016), 211.
tus within conflict zones. Their current qualification as either mercenaries, combatants, or civilians remains disputed. This distinction is important because the law of armed conflict provides any lawful combatants with a legal shield, protecting them from trial and punishment so long as they act in accordance with established rules and regulations for warfare. In all other instances when an non-combatant kills an enemy soldier, the individual has committed homicide and is subject to the enemy’s domestic legal system and their respective penalties. Therefore, qualifying the legal status of contractors are either combatant or non-combatant is especially important for regulating and holding PMCs accountable, specifically when they resort to the use of force.

Many mistake PMCs to be synonymous with mercenaries; however, mercenaries are strictly defined under international conventions. Article 47.2 of Additional Protocol I of the Geneva Convention defines mercenaries as any person without national allegiance or association to the conflict “who is specifically recruited in order to fight” for private gain, whether it be payment or material compensation. This is similar to other mercenary conventions, but is widely viewed as inapplicable since all six cumulative conditions must be fulfilled for an individual to be considered a mercenary. Thus, each case must be evaluated separately to determine mercenary status, and the definition does not cover the whole range of PMC activities. For example, if the contractors share their nationality with a Party of the conflict such as the American and British contractors in Iraq, they would not qualify as mercenaries as per 47.2(D). Moreover, PMC employees are not always “specially recruited to fight in an armed conflict” according to 47.2(A), but instead could be permanent employees of a private company, assigned to various duties and locations. The

definition of a mercenary under international humanitarian law is therefore too specific to be applied to all PMC activity.

The most crucial distinction under international law is between the status of a combatant and the status of a non-combatant, or civilian. PMCs need to make this distinction to clarify their status on the battlefield and thus facilitate regulation. Only combatants can be considered as legitimate military targets by the opposing force and lawfully engage in hostilities. To be considered a lawful combatant, the individual normally must be incorporated within the armed forces of a Party to the conflict as per Article 43.2 of Protocol I of the Geneva Convention. However, international law does not define the steps by which this incorporation should take place; it is simply left for the states to provide a form of official incorporation via their internal laws so that opposing forces also understand what precisely constitutes the states’ military. Even if a PMC acts in a way which links it to a state’s armed forces, there needs to be an official military relationship for them to be considered lawful combatants under Article 43.2. Nonetheless, states hiring PMCs tend to emphasize that those individuals are civilians, so the military incorporation of PMCs is clearly unfulfilled.

The second legal pathway for PMCs to be considered as lawful combatants is found in the Third Geneva Convention. PMCs often go beyond the definitely legal roles of “supply contractors, [or] members of labor units or of services responsible for the welfare of the armed forces.” However, Article 4A(2) defines militias or volunteer corps, which are groups belonging to a Party to the conflict that carry arms independently of a Party. Article 4A(2) defines militias or volunteer corps, which are groups belonging to a Party to the conflict that carry arms independently of a Party. To be considered lawful combatants under Article 43.2, there needs to be an official military relationship for them to be considered lawful combatants under Article 43.2.

39 Ibid.
40 “Private Military Companies.”
42 Cameron, “Private Military Companies: Their Status Under International Humanitarian Law and Its Impact on Their Regulation,” 578.
43 “Private Military Companies.”
44 Faite, “Involvement of Private Contractors in Armed Conflict: Implications under International Humanitarian Law,” 2.
45 Cameron, “Private Military Companies: Their Status Under International Humanitarian Law and Its Impact on Their Regulation,” 582.
46 “Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949.”
47 Cameron, “Private Military Companies: Their Status Under International Humanitarian Law and Its Impact on Their Regulation,” 583.
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
subordinates as well as “a fixed distinctive sign recognizable at a distance.” 51 Although PMCs could be considered members of militias or volunteer corps, they must again belong to a Party to the conflict, resulting in the same difficulties presented by the mercenary definition. Many PMCs would not qualify for Article 4A(2) due to the lack of responsibility in the chain of command, the lack of uniform, the lack of openly carried arms, or their conducting of operations beyond the laws and customs of war. 52 Thus, international law is unable to determine whether PMCs are definitively combatants.

The question of whether or not PMCs are considered civilians is critical. Civilians are strictly prohibited from participating in hostilities and, if they do participate in a “direct part in the hostilities”, they are no longer afforded protection by humanitarian law until they cease their participation. 53 If PMC employees can be considered civilians, this then begs the question of what constitutes a direct participation in the hostilities. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), “direct participation means acts of war which by their nature or purpose are likely to cause actual harm to the personnel and equipment of the enemy armed forces” but “[there] should be a clear distinction between direct participation in hostilities and participation in the war effort.” 54 Support and logistics are considered participation in the war effort, but not direct participation in hostilities unless they perform functions which could cause actual harm to the personnel or equipment of enemy forces. 55

This distinction complicates itself with regard to one of the primary roles of PMCs: security. If PMC personnel are guarding civilian objectives such as schools and hospitals, attacks on such facilities would be illegal under international law. 56 On the contrary, if PMC personnel are guarding military objectives in conflict zones, they could either still be afforded the protections given to civilians or they could be considered as direct participants in hostilities. 57 The reference to “military objectives” is also unclear; while bases, barracks, and ammunition storage facilities are all clearly military sites, power plants, oil sites, or airports may also be considered as military objectives. 58 If the contracted guards were to respond with force, would it qualify as self-defense or as an engagement in direct hostilities? According to Alexandre Faite, former head of the ICRC delegation in Yemen, “the use of force in self-defense should not be seen as direct participation but many commentators note that the limit between defensive and offensive use of force is flimsy.” 59

Member states should consider examining the conditions for the use of force for PMCs as well as the definitions of self-defense and direct participation. Moreover, member states may consider additional suggestions for regulations to further associate and incorporate contractors with their respective national militaries.

Accountability and Transparency

Some critics of PMCs believe that the ambiguity concerning their legal status may be intentional on the part of states to shield their role in covert actions. However, if a state purposefully blurs the line between lawful and unlawful combatants, it may contradict their duties under international humanitarian law. 60 Nonetheless, the secretive nature of the PMC industry is often upheld by their employers, resulting in a lack of transparency and accountability. 61

Although PMCs may make an effort to maintain a good public image due to market incentives, military objectives may override the desire for clean conduct when there are easier options to finish the job. 62 In Peter Singer’s words, “considerations

51 Ibid, 92.
52 Cameron, “Private Military Companies: Their Status Under International Humanitarian Law and Its Impact on Their Regulation,” 585.
53 “Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949.”
57 Ibid, 9.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
60 “Private Military Companies.”
of the commonwealth are matters of morality, while the bottom line is fundamentally amoral." Thus, even if a firm does commit illicit activities, it has little incentive to report it. This demonstrates the root of PMC transparency and accountability issues: monitoring, regulation, and sanction mechanisms are still underdeveloped or entirely non-existent.

With regard to transparency, publicly accessible information about the type of contracts PMCs undertake is incredibly scarce since they are rendered confidential for commercial or national security reasons. To make matters worse, many PMCs subcontract their services to other PMCs, further complicating the issue. For example, employees of the private military company Blackwater USA have sought to cover up incidents of civilian killings in Iraq, occasionally in tandem with the US State Department. Contrary to the terms of its contract, which outlines a strictly protective mission, Blackwater was found by a US Congressional Report to have sometimes participated in offensive operations with the American military and for shooting first in the vast majority of escalation-of-force incidents.

As reported by The New York Times, in one incident, the US State Department and Blackwater paid USD 15,000 to the family of a man killed by a drunk contractor; there is no evidence that the State Department ever tried to restrain the

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63 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
69 Ibid.
PMC, raise concerns about the shooting incidents, or detain contractors for investigation. This lack of transparency may be the very advantage of using PMCs, since they give the cover of plausible deniability that national militaries lack. Their covert use is exemplified by the American employment of PMCs from DynCorp in the ongoing Colombian conflict, since DynCorp is officially contracted for “anti-drug” operations despite being engaged in counter-guerrilla warfare. More recently, PMCs from the Wagner Group—a firm affiliated with the Russian Government—have been active in Syria, Ukraine, the Central African Republic, and Sudan. However, the Russian Government has stated that contractors that were killed-in-action in Syria and Ukraine were there “on their own initiative.” The question of accountability for illegal activity committed by PMCs also remains unresolved. Despite their involvement in grave human rights violations, very few corporations or employees have been legally sanctioned. According to the results of a four-year global study conducted by the UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination (henceforth referred to as the UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries, or simply the UN Working Group), “States’ approach to regulation of an increasingly transnational industry is patchy and inconsistent” and “weak national legislation and enforcement mechanisms, along with ad hoc and fragmented industry self-regulation, cannot address human rights concerns effectively.” For example, although four perpetrators of the 2007 Nisour Square Massacre were arrested and convicted in the United States, only one was convicted of murder; the other three were convicted of manslaughter. Cases of PMCs acting with impunity are generally more like the following: “In 2006, contractors employed by the PMF Triple Canopy were travelling to the airport, when one stated ‘I want to kill someone today.’ Unprovoked, he opened fired on Iraqis driving peaceably along the highway. The PMCs did not stop to determine if casualties resulted, though all accounts suggest civilians died in this attack. The contractor responsible was never charged.”

Normally, PMCs fall through gaps in the law resulting from the lag in the UN and states’ response to the use of PMCs as the industry grows ever larger. This is compounded by the fact that many firms are chartered in offshore accounts, and that firms can avoid having their employees tried in less developed client states as their judicial institutions have less reach.

### Violations of Human Rights

The lack of transparency and accountability results in violations of human rights, many of which are not prosecuted or punished under national or international law. In this section, the cases of violations of human rights by PMCs will be discussed, with particular interest in violations of the rights of women and the rights of children.

As previously mentioned, there have been obvious human rights abuses committed by PMCs in conflict zones. Perhaps the most infamous example is the 2004 Abu Ghraib incident, in which the interrogators—half of whom were from PMCs CACI and Titan—were implicated in the torture, rape, and murder of detainees in the Abu Ghraib prison. Such abuses are not limited to strictly military contexts; The one-time Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg, Brown & Root (now known as KBR) was found responsible for trafficking twelve Nepali

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70 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
74 Del Prado, “The Privatization of War: Mercenaries, Private Military and Security Companies (PMSC).”
men to work on Iraqi bases in 2013. In each case, none of the perpetrators were legally sanctioned. These abuses must also be considered with respect to the rights of women and children.

For women, conflict zones alone already pose a severe threat. The likelihood of becoming a victim of extrajudicial killing rises exponentially for women during armed conflict and they may be deliberately targeted in acts of femicide. A survey conducted in Israel found a link between incidents of domestic violence and homicide and firearms issued to private security guards, and data shows that PMCs are just as likely to perpetrate crimes of sexual violence including “forced prostitution, sex trafficking, forced sterilization, forced abortions, forced impregnation, and pregnancies” - as regular armed forces. For example, DynCorp employees in Bosnia were implicated in a sex ring in 2002, in which underaged women were kept as sex slaves and trafficked. A report by the US Department of Defense Inspector-General blamed the situation on the lack of any requirement for private military and security companies to report or reprimand employees for such conduct.

Due to their age and vulnerability, children also face similar challenges. Sexual abuse, attacks against children, and the use of former child soldiers have all been committed by private military companies. In Colombia, DynCorp contractors working for the United States, alongside Americans soldiers, sexually abused at least 54 children between 2003 and 2007. No one of the abusers were sentenced in either Colombian or American judicial systems due to American personnel being immune from prosecution under a bilateral diplomatic immunity agreement. Additionally, attacks on children by PMCs are also common: on 14 May 2015, Blackwater contractors shot a civilian car, killing the driver and leaving the injured wife and child behind. During the 2007 Nisour Square incident, an 11-year-old boy was killed and a grenade was thrown into a nearby school, injuring several children. Again, only the contractors at Nisour Square were tried for their crimes.

Perhaps of greater concern to the UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries in the most recent session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) is the use of former child soldiers by PMCs. Due to outsourcing, the lack of oversight, and the absence of a proper vetting process, it is very difficult to know the exact number of recruited former child soldiers. For instance, there are concerns regarding the recruitment of former child soldiers from Sierra Leone and Uganda by PMCs for deployment in conflict zones such as Afghanistan and Iraq, which stems from a failure in reintegration and a lack of job opportunities. The re-recruitment of child soldiers does not break the cycle of violence or help resolve childhood trauma; however, the Working Group does state that, given no other alternatives, employment in PMC “administrative, logistics and general supporting service posts” could be a last resort for reintegration. Some commentators also fear the employment of current child soldiers as PMCs due to their lack of accountability and the impunity they enjoy with regard to human rights abuses, and recommend legal measures to prohibit the hiring of individuals under the age of eigh-

81 Ibid, 1196.
82 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
91 Ibid.
93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
teen years. Overall, the legal gaps and missing regulations result in a plethora of human rights violations by PMCs, and the Working Group on the use of mercenaries has repeatedly raised this issue in the HRC.

Beyond their use in conflict zones, PMCs have also been complicit in aiding the violation of human rights by training and supporting the armed forces of states responsible for such abuses. In 2002, PMCs under the American firm MPRI gained permission to operate in Equatorial Guinea. The country has been led since 1979 by President Teodoro Obiang and has violated a multitude of articles under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, engaging in “systematic torture and ill-treatment”, “illegal detention”, “forced labour”, and the discrimination of women among many other abuses. MPRI advised President Obiang in developing the Equatorial Guinean coast guard, and proposed to train the country’s military and police before their program was cancelled by the US State Department.

In 1994, Croatia hired MPRI to train the Croatian Army during the instability after the breakup of Yugoslavia. MPRI provided fourteen weeks of training in physical, logistics, leadership, and military management; within months, Croatia conducted Operation Storm, a campaign to drive the Serbs out of Krajina which “bore all the hallmarks of an American-style” operation. The Croatian Army acted in violation of the UN ceasefire, was responsible for creating 170,000 Serbian refugees, and was found guilty of war crimes and human rights violations. Singer noted that “the dramatic overall improvement in Croat strategic and tactical skills [...] is difficult to ignore.” Therefore, PMCs can also be enablers of human rights abuses in non-combat roles.

Violations of Sovereignty and the Right to Self-Determination

The emergence of PMCs has eroded the traditional concept of national sovereignty and states’ monopoly on the use of force. Likewise, they can also have a negative impact on the right to self-determination, which is the right of peoples “to freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development.” This has been true since the return of mercenaries in the postcolonial era; according to the OHCHR, “Mercenaries were generally used by the colonial power to thwart the aspirations of national liberation movements to self-determination.”

For example, the Katanga secessionists in the Congo Crisis employed mercenaries in 1961 to undermine the new Congolese state and combat UN peacekeepers. Nowadays, PMCs can still interfere with sovereignty, occupy parts of a territory, and aid of coup d’états. They may be employed by parties external to the conflict, by opposition groups who lack popular support, and by governments under threat by opposition groups.

In October 2018, Saeed Mokbil, Chairperson-Rapporteur for the Working Group on the use of mercenaries, reported to the General Assembly’s Third Committee that PMCs “can destabilize a country by violent means, rendering it helpless and...
ineffective, and affecting local populations.\textsuperscript{111} This destabilization is abetted by the violations of human rights committed by PMCs, such as summary executions, forced disappearances, abductions, arbitrary detention and sexual violence.\textsuperscript{112} In particular, small states, especially small island states, are the most vulnerable for such violent attacks.\textsuperscript{113} Also at risk are states located near areas of conflict or of strategic or economic importance to third parties, as well as newer states prone to others’ expansionist policies or internal conspiracies.\textsuperscript{114}

For example, the aforementioned March 2004 attempted coup d’état in Equatorial Guinea (known as the “Wonga coup”) involved members of the South African PMC Executive Outcomes being funded by Mark Thatcher to overthrow the Guinean President with exiled opposition leader Severo Moto.\textsuperscript{115} Motivated by the large oil reserves located in the fourth-largest oil producer in Africa, the plot was stopped by the Equatorial Guinean authorities.\textsuperscript{116} Although Equatorial Guinea managed to thwart the PMC-led coup, it is possible that such a violation of national sovereignty could happen in the future. On the other hand, smaller states who employ PMCs to restore national stability are often burdened with their heavy financial cost, hindering development.\textsuperscript{117} These costs often come in the form of valuable natural resources, such as oilfields.\textsuperscript{118}

**Effects on Interventionism and Conflict Resolution**

One of the major uses of PMCs is that private firms allow states to unofficially intervene in armed conflicts; in other words, “it is easier for the government to do questionable things with contractors.”\textsuperscript{119} PMCs have introduced significant policy impacts that will change modern warfare with regard to the methods of foreign intervention and conflict resolution.

In internal conflicts, third parties may employ PMCs to intervene in the conflict state’s internal affairs.\textsuperscript{120} First and foremost, since they are usually not officially considered as “military,” the use of PMCs allows governments to avoid the perception of having a military presence in a conflict. Particularly in the case of foreign interventions, this avoidance of public discussion can result in faster deployments at the cost of reduced debate, monitoring, and accountability.\textsuperscript{121} This also allows for more covert action and plausible deniability.\textsuperscript{122}

However, the lack of oversight over the executive branch’s covert use of PMCs can also lead to public embarrassment and the exact lack of transparency and accountability of the industry the international community is trying to avoid.\textsuperscript{123} Supporters of interventionism argue that timely military intervention during crucial moments of armed conflicts can prevent widespread human rights violations, and that PMCs help resolve, to an extent, the hesitation that states face when judging the merits of such a humanitarian intervention.\textsuperscript{124} On the contrary, critics argue that the use of PMCs perpetuates conflicts as it is not in their economic interest to terminate conflicts.\textsuperscript{125} Regardless, judging the advantages and disadvantages of foreign interventions themselves is not the focus of this topic nor in the mandate and scope of these discussions. Simply put, PMCs do make the possibility of executing military operations easier.

With regards to conflict resolution, the OHCHR stresses that PMCs provide no long-term solutions for a conflict and do

\textsuperscript{111} GA/SHC/4246, “Mercenaries, Private Military Contractors Can Destabilize Rule of Law, Expert Tells Third Committee, amid Calls to End Racism, Respect Migrant Rights.”
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{113} “Fact Sheet No. 28: The Impact of Mercenary Activities on the Right of Peoples to Self-Determination,” 9.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{117} “Fact Sheet No. 28: The Impact of Mercenary Activities on the Right of Peoples to Self-Determination,” 10.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{120} “Fact Sheet No. 28: The Impact of Mercenary Activities on the Right of Peoples to Self-Determination,” 8.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{125} “Fact Sheet No. 28: The Impact of Mercenary Activities on the Right of Peoples to Self-Determination,” 10.
not address its underlying causes. Moreover, as previously mentioned, the OHCHR states that they prolong conflicts for their own economic interests. However, there are examples of the beneficial use of PMCs to curb conflict. For example, the hiring of the private firm STTEP by the Nigerian government in 2015 to train their military and combat the terrorist group Boko Haram resulted in the suppression of the terrorist group in Nigerian territory within six months; the Nigerian army had spent six years fighting the group prior to the PMC intervention. Although cases such as these seem to show a clear benefit, the authors also note that added intensity of the conflict resulted in a rise in battle deaths, and that PMCs with no competition did not follow this operational model. In addition, the OHCHR insists that the debts resulting from state-PMC contracts - especially those which promise the exchange of natural resources - severely hinder the development of already struggling states.

The growing PMC industry may also lead to arms races, in which various PMCs will compete to provide cheaper and more destructive services to various opposing actors. It is important to bear in mind that these firms have changed the rules of warfare in many ways, particularly with regards to foreign intervention in conflicts.

Current Status

Although there remain serious challenges regarding the regulation of PMCs so that they do not act with impunity, PMCs are now a staple of modern warfare. Market researchers from Visiongain predict that the private military and security services market is set to grow to USD 420 billion by 2029 and the rise of global instability from sources such as climate change may further fuel the industry as demand for public and private security grows.

Current PMC Deployments

PMCs are increasingly common in conflicts around the world. This section will discuss just some of the current PMCs deployments in both military and security capacities, by various actors. However, this is by no means an exhaustive list and it is strongly advised that delegates research their state’s involvement with the PMC industry.

The one of the most prolific employer of PMCs is the United States, which employed 6,318 contractors in Iraq and Syria and 25,239 contractors in Afghanistan in 2018. American-employed PMCs take on a variety of roles including “support for weapons systems and equipment, military advice and training, logistical support, site security (armed and unarmed), crime prevention, police training, and intelligence.” For every one US military personnel in Afghanistan in 2014, there were 1.34 civilian contractors; by 2016, the ratio was one soldier for every 2.92 contractors. This heavy reliance on contractors by the United States military is now so great that a 2016 US Army report stated that the skills and cohesion of actual troops were being eroded to such an extent that future operations undertaken without the assistance of PMCs

126 “Fact Sheet No. 28: The Impact of Mercenary Activities on the Right of Peoples to Self-Determination.”
127 Ibid.
129 Ibid.
130 “Fact Sheet No. 28: The Impact of Mercenary Activities on the Right of Peoples to Self-Determination,” 10.
131 Gilsnan, “The Return of the Mercenary.”
ToPIc b: rEgUlaTIng ThE USE of PrIvaTE MIlITary ConTraCTorS

CuRREnT STaTus could be critically affected. US dependence on PMCs coincides with the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria, since they maintain American presence in the region. However, the United States’ deployment of PMCs is not limited to the Middle East; they are heavily involved with the United States African Command (AFRICOM) and American anti-narcotics and counterterrorism efforts in Latin America.

Although the employment of PMCs is technically illegal in Russia, they are thriving in the country. The industry, born after the large surplus of demobilized troops following the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, is largely characterized by PSCs defending Russian companies abroad. For instance, the Russian oil company Lukoil established its own PMC, Lukom-A, in 2010 to protect its assets in Iraq. Compared to Western PMCs, Russian PMCs tend to be far more straightforward about their combat capabilities, though they also provide a variety of training services. The largest Russian PMC is the Wagner Group, which has been backing the rebellion in Donbas and the annexation of Crimea, training Sudanese and the Central African Republic’s armed forces, and working with President Bashar al-Assad’s forces in Syria since 2014 among various other involvements.

Of course, Russia and the United States are not the sole state employers of PMCs. Among others, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and China have recently secured high profile contracts. Since 2015, the UAE has hired an estimated 1,800 Latin American contractors and 400 Eritrean troops for training and combat to support the Yemeni government’s efforts against the Houthi rebels in the Yemeni Civil War. Yemen’s deposed government is also sponsored by Saudi Arabia, who has also sent their own Sudanese contractors into the country. Meanwhile, PMCs from the Hong Kong-based firm Frontier Services Group (FSG) have established close ties

137 Ibid.
139 Ibid.
140 Åse Gilje Østensen and Tor Bukkvoll, Russian Use of Private Military and Security Companies - the Implications for European and Norwegian Security, report no. 18/01300, Chr. Michelsen Institutt for Videnskap Og Åndsfrihet, Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI), 2018, 7.
141 Ibid, 21.
142 Ibid, 22.
143 Ibid, 12.
144 Ibid, 26; “What is the Wagner Group? Reporters’ Deaths Put Spotlight on Russia’s Shadowy Private Army.”
145 Hager, “Emirates Secretly Sends Colombian Mercenaries to Yemen Fight.”
146 Ibid.
with Chinese state-owned firms since 2014, providing security, logistics, and aviation for them in dozens of countries in Asia, Africa, and Europe.\textsuperscript{147} Their deployment in states such as Congo, Laos, Myanmar, Malta, and Kenya is in connection with China’s Belt and Road initiative, with particular interest in the exploitation of resources.\textsuperscript{148} In February 2019, FSG signed a preliminary deal with the Chinese government to establish a training base in Kashgar, Xinjiang, where up to a million Uighurs and other Muslim minority groups are being held in extrajudicial detention camps.\textsuperscript{149}

Developing states are also employers of PMCs, especially for their security and training functions. As previously mentioned, Nigeria effectively employed the PMC STTEP in 2015 to curb the threat of Boko Haram.\textsuperscript{150} Ghana has nearly 400 private security firms employing some 450,000 contractors for various private actors in a country with only 33,000 police officers.\textsuperscript{151} Patricia Arias, delegate from the UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries, has deemed this ratio between contractors and police “among the most worrying I’ve seen in any country”, and the Working Group warns about the use of these contractors as vigilantes affiliated with various political parties, which pose a serious threat to national security.\textsuperscript{152} PMCs are also employed by non-state actors for their own security purposes.\textsuperscript{153,154} These companies often target their services to the most wealthy individuals, acting as physical symbols of inequality.\textsuperscript{155}

On the contrary, PSCs have been increasingly employed by NGOs and the UN for security purposes in at-risk regions. A study conducted by the Humanitarian Policy Group on UN humanitarian agencies and the largest humanitarian NGOs found that nearly 22% of the organizations used armed security services in 2007 and all had paid for armed security at least once.\textsuperscript{156} This is in response to rising incidents of major violence against aid workers, which have more than doubled between 1997 and 2007.\textsuperscript{157} Nowadays, PMCs have been present in almost all UN peacekeeping operations (PKO) since the 1990s and are relied on as cost-effective supplements or alternatives for national troops.\textsuperscript{158} For example, 169 Gurkhas from the British PMC IDG Security Ltd. were hired directly by the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to supplement the security provided by the Afghan National Police.\textsuperscript{159} However, there are concerns that both forms of employment could lead to armed engagements involving UN-affiliated PMCs in the foreseeable future.\textsuperscript{160}

**Recently Suggested Solutions**

Although the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries was adopted on 4 December 1989 as UNGA Resolution 44/34, only 36 member states have ratified the convention since it entered into force on 20 October 2001.\textsuperscript{161} Major employers of PMCs such as the United States, Russia, China, and the United Kingdom have not signed the convention and its failure to be


\textsuperscript{148} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{149} “Blackwater Founder’s Hong Kong Firm Signs Xinjiang Training Camp Deal.”

\textsuperscript{150} Varin, “Turning the Tides of War: The Impact of Private Military and Security Companies on Nigeria’s Counterinsurgency Against Boko Haram,” 144.


\textsuperscript{152} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{155} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{157} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{159} “Activities of Private Military and Security Companies: Regulation and Oversight.”

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid, 23.

To date, the use of private military contractors (PMCs) has been widely adopted due to a variety of reasons. First and foremost, its controversial definition of mercenarism shares the same technical problems as the aforementioned Additional Protocol I of the Geneva Convention. In addition, there are three other issues identified by the South African Institute of International Affairs:

“(1) Only when the crime of mercenarism is committed within the boundaries of a state or by a national of a state is that state accorded jurisdiction to deal with the crime;

(2) In the event of conflict, the Convention denies to the aggrieved state the right to proceed against an offending state;

(3) The Convention provides for no monitoring mechanism of its provisions, thus placing that responsibility on the individual member states.”

Moreover, the Convention’s legal impact has been undermined as a result of certain signatories – namely Angola, Congo, and Nigeria - having had direct dealings with PMCs themselves. The Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa (established under the Organization for African Unity, which has since become the African Union) faces similar challenges, having only 32 state parties to the convention. The Convention prohibits the use of mercenaries against AU-recognized liberation movements, but allows the use of mercenaries for governments defending themselves from dissident groups. Regardless of both Convention’s attempts to prohibit the use of mercenaries, delegates must also remind themselves of the section regarding the International Legal Status of PMCs; not all PMCs fall under the definitions proposed thus far by the international community.

There have been attempts to improve transparency and accountability from within the PMC industry in recent years. The International Committee of the Red Cross and the Swiss Government established the Montreux Document in 2008: a compilation of best practices for states to promote respect for international humanitarian law and human rights among private security contractors. Similarly, the Swiss Government created the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Services Provides (ICoC), in 2010 which is intended to complement state regulation in complex security situations. The Montreux Document and ICoC are known as the “Swiss Initiatives”, and have been acknowledged for their “valuable impact” by the UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries; however, the Working Group also stresses that “both national legislation and voluntary initiatives have limitations in ensuring accountability and access to effective remedies.”

On 15 September 2017, the completion of a four-year global study by the Working Group expressed serious concern with regard to regulatory gaps in national laws and self-regulation initiatives concerning PMCs. The Working Group reiterated their calls for an “international legally binding instrument to ensure consistent regulation worldwide and adequate protection of the human rights of all affected by the activities of private military and security companies.” The Working Group also recommended the establishment of greater accountability for PMCs to their country of origin via the implementation of oversight mechanisms, penal accountability and civil liability for human rights violations, and reparation and remedy for

162 Ibid.
163 Cameron, “Private Military Companies: Their Status Under International Humanitarian Law and Its Impact on Their Regulation,” 578.
167 Kinsey, “International Law and the Control of Mercenaries and Private Military Companies.”
169 “Private Military Companies.”
172 Ibid.
Victims. Finally, they also strongly advise member states to ratify the UN and AU Mercenary Conventions.

In 2018, the Working Group focused on the recruitment of former and current child soldiers by the PMC industry, urging member states to criminalize the recruitment and use of children under 18 years of age in armed conflict and to treat children associated with armed NSAs as victims with special protections. This would also include a minimum age of criminal responsibility below which children cannot be held criminally responsible, and should thus be tried in a juvenile justice system and be given rehabilitative sentences. Moreover, the Working Group calls upon states to improve reintegration programs for former child soldiers so that they are not re-recruited by PMCs; if there are no other alternatives, they may be employed in strictly non-combat roles.

Sustainable Development Goals

The emergence of PMCs has equally created challenges for the achievement of the UN SDGs. They are especially relevant to Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals.

Regarding Goal 16, the UN Working Group has specifically addressed the serious obstacles which mercenaries, foreign fighters, and PMCs present towards its achievement. Saeed Mokbil, Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Working Group, considers Goal 16 to be of special importance as it enables the achievement of the other goals. In their August 2018 report, the Working Group stated that the violations of human rights and humanitarian law committed by PMCs directly contradict the objectives of Goal 16 to improve access to justice and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels in society. PMCs can perpetuate conflict, commit human rights violations, and destabilize sovereign states, increasing forms of violence. Moreover, they have been connected to the abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and killing of children as well as to illegal arms trafficking. PMCs almost always avoid accountability under the rule of law due to a lack of transparency and accountability for contractors as national institutions - particularly those in developing countries - are not yet strong enough or lack the proper legislation to regulate PMCs. Working towards the resolution of these challenges will play a major role in achieving Goal 16 as a whole.

Concerning Goal 17, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has emphasized the “importance of cooperation, such as mixed border commissions, joint border security monitoring mechanisms and intelligence-sharing between national defense forces” so that mercenarism can be monitored and prevented. Indeed, the international and privatized nature of the PMC industry necessitates partnerships so that other relevant SDGs can be achieved as well. The 2017 report from the Working Group on the use of mercenaries stresses this transnational aspect, suggesting “international, regional and subregional agreements for the regulation of private military and security companies” and the promotion of discussions on the role of PMCs in the context of regional and international security via their incorporation in the “agendas of intergovernmental, regional and subregional organizations.” Such global partnership would enhance policy coherence for sustainable development (Goal 17.14), respect national lead-

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173 Ibid.
174 Ibid.
176 Ibid.
177 Ibid.
179 Ibid.
180 GA/SHC/4246, “Mercenaries, Private Military Contractors Can Destabilize Rule of Law, Expert Tells Third Committee, amid Calls to End Racism, Respect Migrant Rights.”
182 Ibid.
183 Ibid.
184 Ibid.
ership to implement policies for the SDGs (Goal 17.15), and encourage effective partnerships (Goal 17.17).  

On a final note, Secretary-General Guterres has also underscored that the achievement of SDGs to create more opportunities for youth can help reduce the lure of mercenarism.  

**Bloc Analysis**

**Point of Division**

The opinions of UN member states concerning the use of PMCs is deeply divided and the blocs surrounding the issue are flexible. Their country positions are generally based on two determinants: their national policies regarding the employment of PMCs, which is rooted in their military budget, defense policy, and the degree of state authority over their armed forces; and their prior experience with PMCs, meaning whether the deployment of PMCs on their territory was perceived as positive or negative. Moreover, perspectives on the issue are also shaped by a country’s opinion of international law.

To capture the broad positions regarding the PMC questions, the following blocs will be discussed: states in favor of PMCs in combat, states in favor of PMCs in non-combat and security capacities, states opposing the widespread use of PMCs, and developing states in favor of PMCs. It is strongly encouraged that each delegate conducts thorough research into their own country’s position, and the following section should be considered as a broad overview of the spectrum of positions regarding the topic.

**States in Favor of PMCs in Combat Capacities**

States in favor of PMCs in combat capacities are also currently the major employers of PMCs worldwide. Broadly speaking, they represent some of the world’s largest military spenders: the United States, Saudi Arabia, Russia, and the United Kingdom. Other countries include Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Colombia, Angola, Yemen, and Israel. This bloc is relatively small, as the majority of UN member states oppose the deployment of PMCs in combat due to the fact that it is generally viewed as illegal under international law. However, defendants of the unrestricted deployment of PMCs stand behind the principle of state sovereignty and often use PMCs as cost-effective alternatives for national armed forces. For example, the representative of the Russian Federation during the 73rd session of the UNGA Third Committee did affirm that states should bear responsibility for the actions of contractors they use and that there should be further legal and international measures to address mercenarism; however, they also emphasized that efforts must be made to respect states’ sovereignty. Meanwhile, Erik Prince, founder of Blackwater, proposed in January 2019 to President of the United States, Donald Trump, a large-scale deployment of PMCs in Syria to protect American interests and allies in the region as America prepares to withdraw its own armed forces. A similar plan was suggested to President Trump in 2017 regarding the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan, which was well-received by the President at the time due to the cheaper
budgetary estimates. It should be noted that many of these bloc members’ use of PMCs also is secretive in nature, resulting in a severe lack of transparency for external actors. Overall, this bloc is resistant to further regulations of PMCs and increased oversight or transparency, preferring the status quo.

**States in Favor of PMCs in Non-Combat and Security Capacities**

A large group of developed and developing countries alike, including some of the world’s largest military powers, belong to this bloc which supports the use of PMCs in strictly non-combat or defensive roles. Big military spenders who employ PMCs within this category include Canada, China, Germany, and Italy. France, the fifth largest military spender in the world, also supports the use of PMCs in this manner by other states but rejects their employment by the French armed forces. Other countries include Austria, Australia, Croatia, Bosnia, Albania, Switzerland, Mexico, Liberia, Turkey, and South Korea. In addition, the European Union as a whole generally supports this perspective on the issue of PMCs. During the 73rd session of the Third Committee, the representative of the European Union stressed that the PMC industry is an essential service provider, but also recognized the harms that mercenarism causes towards the achievement of SDG Goal 16.

The core of this bloc’s position is its emphasis on the crucial military and security purposes that PMCs can occupy without being deployed for direct combat. Moreover, these states also acknowledge the scale of the industry and its economic benefit. For instance, although Canada lacks strong official legislation dealing with PMCs and has signed contracts with PMCs for logistics and security purposes for its armed forces in Afghanistan and its foreign affairs missions, the country also participates closely with the Swiss Initiatives and upholds strict contract conditions with partnered firms, limiting security providers’ use of force to self-defense in accordance with accepted international standards. In conclusion, this bloc may support moderate forms of regulations for PMCs and the prohibition of contractor firms who are employed for combat purposes, but hesitates to deem all PMCs as harmful due to their perceived security, military, and economic benefits as well as their use for humanitarian operations by the UN and NGOs.

**States Opposing the Widespread Use of PMCs**

As a result of the historical employment of mercenaries in the latter half of the 20th century by colonial powers or civil dissidents against anti-colonial liberation movements or governments, the contemporary bloc which opposes the widespread use of PMCs includes many formerly colonized states and states that worry about their future use in such a manner. Bloc members typically oppose the use of PMCs in conflict zones as they undermine the state’s monopoly on the legitimate use of force and can result in the destabilization of sovereign states by external actors. Some states might even support the complete prohibition of PMCs by all actors due to their potential for causing civil unrest and weaponizing opposition groups, but most recognize the usefulness of PSCs for private security purposes. Many states who oppose PMCs associate their status with that of mercenaries and thus perceive their deployment as contrary to international customary norms and conventions.

This bloc generally includes state parties to the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, such as Cuba, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Seychelles, Ukraine, Suriname, Morocco, Poland, Cyprus, Georgia, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Costa Rica, New Zealand, Ecuador, and Mali; however, certain

198 Ibid.
201 A/RES/73/159, “Use of Mercenaries as a Means of Violating Human Rights and Impeding the Exercise of the Right of Peoples to Self-Determination.”
203 Ibid.
204 David Antonyshyn, Jan Grofe and Don Hubert, Beyond the Law? The Regulation of Canadian Private Military and Security Companies Operating Abroad, report no. 03/09, Priv War, 2009, 22.
205 “Fact Sheet No. 28: The Impact of Mercenary Activities on the Right of Peoples to Self-Determination,” 5.
206 “Private Military Companies.”
states who have ratified the convention still employ PMCs.207 States who have not ratified the United Nations Mercenary Convention but are also opposed to their use include Equatorial Guinea, Argentina, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Myanmar, Algeria, and Pakistan.208 These states have often faced internal violence at the hands of unregulated and usually foreign PMCs, or worry about the potential future employment of military contractors by NSAs to challenge state authority. For example, Cuba - alongside other developing countries - spearheaded the adoption of draft resolution A/C.3/73/L.37 “Use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination” in October 2018, which expressed explicit concern about PMCs and encouraged the submission of concerns to the HRC and the Working Group on the use of mercenaries.209 In support of the draft resolution during the 73rd session of the Third Committee, the representative of Equatorial Guinea stated that mercenaries - including PMCs - had been responsible for four coup d’états in their country, and that mercenaries can be used by other countries to acquire another’s natural resources.210 In general, states opposing the widespread use of PMCs are strong proponents of the UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries’ mandate. Moreover, they believe that PMCs can perpetuate cycles of violence and violate state sovereignty and the right of self-determination.

209 Ibid.
210 GA/SHC/4252, “Third Committee Approves 11 Drafts amid Heated Debate over Death Penalty Moratorium, Use of Mercenaries, Efforts to End Cybercrime.”
Developing States in Favor of PMCs

While many developing states (often formerly colonized states) are strongly against PMCs, there is a unique bloc of member states who support the use of PMCs but are also developing countries. These states usually employ PMCs in training and counterterrorism or counterinsurgency capacities, relying on their experience, expertise, and resources to strengthen their own forces. States in this bloc include Sudan, Uganda, South Africa, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, the Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, and Syria, alongside the aforementioned Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Colombia, Mexico, Liberia, and Angola. As previously explained in the “Effects on Interventionism and Conflict Resolution” section, the combat abilities and training skills of PMCs can often be invaluable for the weaker militaries of developing states. After their successful operations in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Angola, PMCs are now involved in various other developing states in mostly training roles; however, human rights issues may not always be considered during their employment. For example, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed in January 2019 that Russian contractors were training the military and law enforcement agencies of the Republic of Sudan as anti-government demonstrations escalate.211 Reports from Sudan show Russian-speaking men in military trucks on the streets of Khartoum, and there is now proof of correspondence between the head of the Russian PMC Wagner Group and former Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir as popular protests and government crackdowns became increasingly violent.212

On the other hand, PMCs from DynCorp played an important role in stabilizing post war Liberia from 2003 to 2008 by retraining and restructuring the Liberian armed forces.213 For the governments of developing states of this bloc, PMCs offer a simple and effective solution to their security problems by relieving them of their dependence on other states’ military

Committee Mission

The United Nations General Assembly’s First Committee, DIS-SEC, is responsible for “disarmament, global challenges, and threats to peace” as well as the international security regime.214 In particular, the First Committee is tasked with deciding “the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security” within the scope of the Charter of the UN, meaning that it may make recommendations for its member states or the UNSC; however, these recommendations are strictly non-binding.215 The question of PMCs falls directly within the mandate of the First Committee as it is fundamentally a global challenge to the international security regime due to the transnational and international deployments of PMCs and their subversion of international humanitarian law, human rights, and state sovereignty.216

The emergence of PMCs has reshaped the conduct of modern warfare and represents the multifaceted and complex nature of security issues today. PMCs will not and cannot disappear overnight due to the sheer size of the industry, but simply allowing it to grow without regulations will clearly cause further challenges to international security.217 Moreover, their variety of combat and non-combat functions adds further nuance to the issue. This committee may explore recommend stronger national and international standards for the regulation of PMCs or call for further legal sanctions against PMCs involved in human rights violations. But are certain cat-

216 A/RES/73/159. “Use of Mercenaries as a Means of Violating Human Rights and Impeding the Exercise of the Right of Peoples to Self-Determination.”
217 Cameron, “Private Military Companies: Their Status Under International Humanitarian Law and Its Impact on Their Regulation,” 576.
egories of PMCs - if any - permissible? If so, which ones? Who should be allowed to employ them? These are precisely the types of questions concerning disarmament and security that this committee can consider.
Research and Preparation Questions

Your dais has prepared the following research and preparation questions as a means of providing guidance for your research process. Delegates are NOT obligated to formally answer these questions either in committee or in position papers. Rather, these questions should be carefully considered, as they embody some of the main critical thought and learning objectives surrounding your topic.

**Topic A**

1. What is your country’s current and past policy on disarmament? Has it demonstrated an active effort in taking weapons out of conflict zones? Has it sold weapons to groups or states despite international rules and regulations?
2. What are your state’s military and political foreign policy objectives? How might this affect how it deals with disarmament in the Middle East and North Africa?
3. Is your country involved in ongoing military conflict(s)? If so, how does this affect its views on disarmament and development? How have these conflicts impacted the people of your country?
4. What is your state’s level of weapon possession or production? How much priority does military spending take in your state’s government and why? How does your country fight or contribute to illegal arms markets globally?
5. Is your state a post-conflict country? How has your country been working towards better development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals?

**Topic B**

1. Has your state ever employed PMCs? If so, which kind of PMCs have they employed? To what extent has your country’s relationship to PMCs affected its domestic and international policy?
2. Were mercenaries involved in the history of your country? How might that affect your country’s sentiments towards the regulation of PMCs?
3. Is your state allied with any other states that are actively utilizing PMCs? Which foreign governments might have influence over your country’s stance on foreign policy issues? How might this network of bilateral relationships affect how they approach PMCs?
4. Has your country ratified the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries? If so, has your country complied with it? What is your country’s attitude towards countries that have not signed on to the treaty?
5. Does your country have an international policy that aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals that may inform their policy on the regulation of PMCs? What is your country actively doing to support the Sustainable Development Goals?
Important Documents

Topic A


This source is the Report of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries that was presented to the 36th session of the HRC. It discusses the findings of a global study regarding PMCs that took place in 60 states between 2013 and 2016 and provides a detailed list of recommendations. This is probably the best representation of the UN Working Group’s current stance on the issue of PMCs.


This source introduces a detailed history of private military companies before exploring in-depth the legal status of PMCs as mercenaries, combatants, or non-combatants. It provides a great analysis of the legal issues facing PMCs and their consequent accountability and regulatory challenges as well.


This source discusses the gender statistics within the United Nations, specifically highlighting the lack of gender equality in the First Committee.

Topic B


This document talks about the Secretary-General’s perspective on disarmament and development and includes the policies from several countries on the same topic.


This source provides a definition for ‘development’ as stated by the United Nations.


This source provides an in-depth and multifaceted approach to the mercenary question, particularly with regard to the right of self-determination, through its analysis of several areas of concern. Moreover, it also explains the legal issues, the existing international framework, current international and domestic laws, and the work of the Special Rapporteur of the UN Commission on Human Rights. Finally, it explains the debate’s unresolved issues.

HRC/NONE/2018/40. “Mercenarism and Private Military and Security Companies.” April 2018. Accessed 29 September 2019. This source is a good overview of the work of the UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries and outlines their general recommendations, emphasizing their support for “both soft law options of regulation and an international binding instrument” as well as for the Montreux Document. They call for the vetting of personnel, licensing and registration criteria, limitations on permissible functions, accountability for perpetrators of human rights violations and enforceable remedies for their victims.


This source provides a broad overview of the history of PMCs and their different types. It is considered a cornerstone of PMC research and many other works on the subject reference this paper.
Works Cited

Committee History and Simulation


_Agenda of the 71st session of the First Committee of the General Assembly._


_The first resolution passed by the First Committee, establishing a commission related to nuclear weapons._


_A landmark resolution that addresses the creation of a nuclear free zone in the Middle East._


_Text of the Arms Trade Treaty, a major international treaty passed only a few years ago to address the rising trade of small arms._


_The United Nations’ overview of the First Committee._

Topic A

UN Sources


_This source describes the Sustainable Development Goals the United Nations developed and provides background on the creation and definition of the goals._


_This source talks about the increase in poverty levels in the Middle East according to the World Bank 2018 Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report._


_This source talks about the increase in poverty levels in the Middle East according to the World Bank 2018 Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report._


_This report describes the disparity of the unemployment rate in Egypt among men versus women._
This is a summary of the agenda for the 73rd Session of the First Committee of the UN where the topic of disarmament and development was discussed. It also features links to more detailed related documents from this session.

This document describes countries that are currently in fragile situations as a result of conflicts in their area. The list was developed by the World Bank.

This article talks about challenges in poverty reduction in the Middle East.

This site provides a definition for each of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

This source provides the frequently asked questions regarding the World Bank’s list of countries currently in fragile situations. It provides a definition for ‘fragile countries’ as stated by the World Bank.

This source discusses the purpose behind the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and describes what the agenda is hoping to achieve.

This article describes the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and highlights the lack of representation among women in debates regarding nuclear disarmament.

This site gives background on Al Thawra, the largest referral hospital in Sana’a, the capital of Yemen.

This report discusses the gender disparity among men and women in Yemen. It focuses on the differences in the rate and participation in regard to the labor force.
Non-UN Sources


This article describes North Korea’s development in regard to military armaments and paints the country as being a powerful global military force.


This article discusses the rights of women in the Middle East and their restrictions, specifically talking about differences between countries.


This site talks about how the Middle East and North Africa region spent over USD 160 billion towards the military from 2011-2014.


This article talks about one woman’s experience in a Yemeni Cholera Camp. It sheds light on the cholera epidemic and discusses the hardships many Yemeni people are going through.


This report lays out all the events surrounding the crisis in Libya that occurred in 2018, specifically focusing on the human rights aspect.


This source discusses the large spread of renewable energy within the Middle East and recognizes it to be an important source of employment for those in the region.


This site lays out what a coup is and gives a breakdown on the number of coup occurrences within Africa.


This site talks about the large source of wealth oil provides the Middle East at the moment.


This article focuses on technology startup companies in the Middle East and how they are proving to be quite successful in the region.

This article discusses an event in which Iran shot down a US drone in the Strait of Hormuz and highlights the ongoing conflict between the two countries.


This report describes the language barriers often present in United Nations meetings, causing a lack of equality among all delegations.


This source talks about the motivation behind why people join the terrorist organization Al-Shabaab. It concludes that many join due to economic reasons.


This article provides a list of the top 10 countries exporting military weapons globally.


This source talks about how low-income youth are often those that the military targets for recruitment.


This article describes the large increase in technology start-up companies in the Middle East as the number of people investing in these companies grows.


This article talks about an arms deal between the US and Saudi Arabia and, as of the publication date, its low performance.


This site provides background and historical description of disarmament and development.


This source talks about the mutually reinforcing relationship between disarmament and development.

*This source describes solutions on how underrepresented countries can have a voice in regard to disarmament and development.*


*This source describes the definition of disarmament as said by the United Nations.*


*This article discusses an event in Yemen in which a bomb was dropped on a school bus by the U.S.*


*This article describes how weapons created by the US and sold to Saudi Arabia have ended up in the hands of terrorist organizations.*


*This source gives information regarding US sanctions on Iran.*


*This article discusses child casualties in Yemen as a result of ongoing conflict within the country.*


*This source discusses the economics behind promoting gender equality in the Middle East and North Africa.*


*This source describes the cholera outbreak in Yemen, focusing on how many people have been affected and the magnitude of the epidemic.*


*This article talks about how Iran has breached a 2015 nuclear agreement by surpassing its Uranium limit and how this could lead to escalating tensions with the US and potentially cause future problems.*

This site highlights the largest disputes and conflicts occurring globally and categorizes them in levels of conflict significance.


This article talks about the large global military expenditure and how just 10% of this spending could end poverty across the world.


This site discusses the income levels of those in the military.


This article discusses the difficult conditions Iraqi people have been facing as a result of the conflict in their territory.


This article describes the background and guidelines of the Iran Nuclear Deal. It also discusses how US President Donald Trump removed the US from the nuclear deal and the impact that decision has left on the international community.


This site talks about how Abu Dhabi has vowed that it will have seven percent renewable energy by 2020. It focuses on the renewable energy progress within the Middle East.


This source discusses the gender disparity in the United Nations regarding discussions about nuclear disarmament. It highlights that women are even thought to be more impacted by nuclear weapons than men.


This article talks about how US President Donald Trump was planning to release a drone strike on Iran in retaliation for the country shooting down one of the American drones. However, Trump decided to call the drone strike off.


This source describes the countries across the globe that are currently experiencing war and conflict.

This article discusses a survey conducted regarding the rights and capabilities of men and women in the Middle East. The survey revealed that there is a large gender gap in the region, socially, economically, and politically.


This report discusses and examines the prison system in Libya following two assessments by the US Institute of Peace of detention centers in Libya.


This article talks about how in 2017, Arab entrepreneurs had raised the largest amount of investments for technology thus far in the Persian Gulf Region.


This site describes the increase in illnesses in the Middle East and how this growth has negatively impacted the region.


This article discusses military spending trends across the globe in 2018.


This article provides US President Donald Trump’s perspective on the Iran nuclear deal and how he does not believe in the terms of the agreement.


This source focuses on how females’ voices are not heard when it comes to disarmament globally.


The report discusses the significant income inequality in the Middle East.

This source talks about how many organizations are putting in large amounts of effort to provide the necessary resources and develop the best environment for people in the Middle East.


*This source discusses some of the main causes for the disputes currently occurring within the Middle East.*


*This article describes Iran’s response to the US and the public after shooting down the US drone.*


*This source gives an in-depth explanation of the most current conflict in Syria, focusing on the events of its civil war.*


*This article talks about current events regarding the Syrian conflict and gives details on the casualties thus far as a result of the disputes.*


*This site goes over how much of the youth is unhappy with their governments in the Middle East, causing uprisings and conflicts throughout the region.*


*This report goes over the lack of representation of lower-income countries in United Nations debates regarding nuclear disarmament.*


*This source discusses the level of poverty in Syria.*


*This article describes US President Donald Trump’s reaction to Iran shooting down a US drone. He claims that the act was carried out by a naive member of the Iran National Guard.*


*This source discusses the background of DISEC and recent developments of the committee.*

This site talks about the background and current events regarding the war in Yemen.

This article describes the trends in the global arms trade. It highlights that the US is the largest exporter of military weapons and is the largest feeder of weaponry into the Middle East.

This source provides a definition for the term ‘post-conflict country’.

This article talks about how a lack of economic and social opportunity is a large region why many join terrorist organizations.

This article looks at the factors behind the current situation in Libya, especially concerning government control and authority in the country.

This site discusses how increases in military spending lead to less funding being allocated towards diminishing global poverty.

This source describes the vast potential for renewable energy in the Middle East, focusing on how the International Atomic Energy Agency stats that solar and wind power will account for a majority of the electricity supply in the region by 2050.

**Topic B**

**UN Sources**

This source is the Report of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries that was presented to the 73rd session of the General Assembly. It discusses the link between the Working Group’s findings and SDG 16 and recommends further ratifications of the 1989 Mercenary Convention, increased liability for mercenaries, further investigations into human rights violations committed by mercenaries, domestic legislation to regulate PMCs through licensing, registration, and vetting, and perhaps offering human rights training to PMCs, among other suggestions.

This source is the most recent draft resolution regarding mercenaries and PMCs to be proposed to and adopted by the General Assembly.

This source is the Report of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries that was presented to the 36th session of the HRC. It discusses the findings of a global study regarding PMCs that took place in 60 states between 2013 and 2016 and provides a detailed list of recommendations. This is probably the best representation of the UN Working Group’s stance on the issue of PMCs.


This source is the Report of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries that was presented to the 39th session of the HRC. It addresses the recruitment of child soldiers and former child soldiers by non-state armed groups by urging UN member states to criminalize the use of child soldiers and terminate ties with PMCs who employ them, among other recommendations.


This source is the foundation of the United Nations discussion regarding Private Military Contractors. It outlines the official definition of a mercenary and details the prohibitions of such work.


This source is the final product of draft resolution A/C.3/73/L.37, which expresses concern by the UNGA regarding PMCs. This source’s voting record is especially useful to determine national positions on the matter.


This source is the presentation of the UN Working Group for their meetings with the regional groups of the HRC. It provides a broad overview of PMC employment by States, NSAs, and the UN.


This source describes the reaction of the UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries’ reaction to the conviction of four Blackwater contractors in connection with the Nisour Square Massacre.


This source is the HRC’s concluding observations on the situation of civil and political rights in Equatorial Guinea during their Periodical Review.


This source is the Charter of the United Nations, the foundational document for the organization.

“Fact Sheet No. 28: The Impact of Mercenary Activities on the Right of Peoples to Self-Determination.” Geneva: United Na-
This source provides an in-depth and multifaceted approach to the mercenary question, particularly with regard to the right of self-determination, through its analysis of several areas of concern. Moreover, it also explains the legal issues, the existing international framework, current international and domestic laws, and the work of the Special Rapporteur of the UN Commission on Human Rights. Finally, it explains the debate's unresolved issues.


GA/SHC/4246. “Mercenaries, Private Military Contractors Can Destabilize Rule of Law, Expert Tells Third Committee, amid Calls to End Racism, Respect Migrant Rights.” 30 October 2018. This source describes the discussions of the 39th and 40th meetings of the 73rd session of the UNGA Third Committee, during which the Chairperson-Rapporteur for the Working Group on the use of mercenaries addressed the committee.

GA/SHC/4252. “Third Committee Approves 11 Drafts amid Heated Debate over Death Penalty Moratorium, Use of Mercenaries, Efforts to End Cybercrime.” 13 November 2018. This source reports on the discussions of the 46th and 47th meetings of the 73rd session of the UNGA Third Committee, during which the Committee voted on and adopted draft resolution A/C.3/73/L.37.


“Ghana needs tougher action on mercenaries and private security to safeguard stability, UN group finds.” OHCHR. Last modified 20 December 2017. www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22555&LangID=E. This source reports on the findings of the UN Working Group regarding Ghana’s rising PMC sector, which is being fueled by competing political parties hiring “vigilante groups”.

HRC/NONE/2018/40. “MERCENARISM AND PRIVATE MILITARY AND SECURITY COMPANIES.” April 2018. This source outlines the general recommendations of the UN Working Group on the use of mercenaries, emphasizing their support for “both soft law options of regulation and an international binding instrument” as well as for the Montreux Document. They call for the vetting of personnel, licensing and registration criteria, limitations on permissible functions, accountability for perpetrators of human rights violations and enforceable remedies for their victims.


This source lists states that have ratified the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries as well as states that are signatories.


SG/SM/6613. “Secretary-General Reflects on “ Intervention” in Thirty-Fifth Annual Ditchley Foundation Lecture.” 26 June 1998. This source is a transcript of former Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s speech to the 35th Annual Ditchley Foundation Lecture, in which he discusses the possibility of privatizing peacekeeping.

“Sustainable Development Goals.” UN. Accessed 14 July 2019. sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300. This source is the official UN source for information on the SDGs.


“World must do more to tackle ‘shadowy’ mercenary activities undermining stability in Africa, says UN chief.” UN News. Last modified 4 February 2019. news.un.org/en/story/2019/02/1031931. This source reports on Secretary-General Antonio Guterres’ address to the UN Security Council regarding the rise of mercenarism in Africa.

**Non-UN Sources**

Ackerman, Spencer. “Abu Ghraib torture suit against contractor revived by federal court.” The Guardian. 30 June 2014. www.theguardian.com/law/2014/jun/30/irak-lawsuit-defense-contractor-torture-abu-graib. This source describes the court case concerning the firm CACI and their activities at Abu Ghraib prison, where they allegedly participated in the torture, rape, and beating of prisoners and attempted to cover up the abuses.

Akcinaroglu, Seden and Radziszewski, Elizabeth. “Private Military Companies, Opportunities, and Termination of Civil Wars in Africa.” Journal of Conflict Resolution 57. No. 5 (1 October 2013): 795-821. This source proposes that PMCs have had a positive effect on the conflict resolution of civil wars in Africa as their profit-seeking nature incentivizes their efficient termination of the conflict in exchange for contracts to extract natural resources in peace time.

Antonyshyn, David, Jan Grofe and Don Hubert. Beyond the Law? The Regulation of Canadian Private Military and Security Companies Operating Abroad. Report no. 03/09. Priv War. 2009. 1-33. This source provides a comprehensive profile of Canada’s involvement with PMCs and the country’s regulations and compliance with international law.

This source explores the “legal gap” between PMC work and international and American human rights laws as well as the lack of international regulation in the post-9/11 era. It proposes different legal improvements so that individual, corporate, and national actors can be liable for PMC violations of human rights.


This source analyses the relationship between PMCs and the United States government and armed forces, assessing their impact on recent military deployments and observing their effectiveness.


This source provides a detailed history of the involvement of mercenaries in the Congo Crisis.


This source explains China’s growing employment of the PMC Frontier Services Group (FSG) to provide security, aviation and logistics to Chinese firms operating in Africa and Southeast Asia as part of the Belt and Road initiative.


This source reports on a contract between a PMC and the People’s Republic of China to build a training base in the autonomous region of Xinjiang.


This source argues that States maintain primacy over the legitimate use of force and PMCs through national legislation and weaker international norms. It supports their use as a cheap and efficient reaction force as opposed to national militaries.


This source lays out the anatomy of the Nisour Square Massacre with a clear, graphical portrayal of the event.


This source introduces a detailed history of private military companies before exploring the legal status of PMCs as combatants or non-combatants.

This source assesses the situation of PMCs in France: their relationship with the French State, how they are regulated, and what forms of contracts they have undertaken.


Crowe, Jonathan and John, Anna. “The Status of Private Military Security Companies in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations under the International Law of Armed Conflict.” Melbourne Journal of International Law 18. No. 1 (2017): 16-44. This source reports the status of PMCs that were hired by the UN for peacekeeping operations as well as their history with humanitarian intervention.


Eckert, Amy E. Outsourcing War: The Just War Tradition in the Age of Military Privatization. Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2016. This source discusses the political philosophy behind the privatization of military functions, and the role that states play in the current international order. It also analyzes the concrete effects of PMCs on the state monopoly on the legitimate use of force.


forcing-the-army-to-replace-soldiers-with-contractors/?utm_term=.5b7e1de80de8.
This source describes the proliferation of PMCs in Afghanistan and Iraq by the USA since the War on Terror began.

This source is an interview with a former contractor of DynCorp, Sean McFate, who discusses the potential consequences of unchecked growth in the private military industry.

This source reports on the cases of American soldiers and contractors being implicated in the sexual abuse of children in Colombia while participating in the US-Colombian joint antinarcotics operation, Plan Colombia. No suspected abusers were tried due to the bilateral diplomatic immunity agreement.

This source reports that the UAE has hired hundreds of Latin American mercenaries and - potentially - Eritrean troops to fight Yemeni rebels in the Yemeni Civil War.

This source reports on US President Donald Trump’s receptiveness towards the use of PMCs in Afghanistan and Syria as he moves towards withdrawing American troops from those countries.

This source provides a detailed history of Western mercenarism and the rise of PMCs.

This source is the official website of the ICoCA, the primary self-regulation mechanism for the PMC industry.

This source provides a list of signatories and ratifications of the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries.

This source reports on the use of PMCs by the UN and their often opaque nature.


This source thoroughly explores the various approaches to developing a legal regime for PMCs via various international bodies, including the Swiss Initiatives and the United Nations.


This source analyzes the effects of human rights violations committed by PMCs, particularly acts violating the rights of women and of the child. It then discusses various international humanitarian legal remedies.


This source details the development of international humanitarian law surrounding mercenary work and contemporary PMCs.


This source analyzes the relationship between mercenary work and State sovereignty through an examination of PMCs in Africa in the postcolonial era. It discusses in particular the African Union’s response to mercenaries as well as the use of PMCs by failing states and for coup d’êtaats.


This source provides an estimate for the future growth of the PMC industry.


This source argues that PMCs render war more palatable for national publics. While it avoids a judgement of whether foreign interventions are justified, the source states that the deaths of contractors “don’t make headlines” and that they are typically excluded from official conflict death tolls.


This source describes the trial of PMCs involved in the 2004 attempted coup d’etat in Equatorial Guinea.


This source explains the extensive use of Russian PMCs such as the Wagner Group in Syria and Ukraine. These groups are allegedly closely affiliated with the Russian Federation but are legally private companies to allow for government deniability.

This source laments the stagnation of the international legal regime regarding the accountability of PMCs in the face of an ever-growing global PMC industry. Not only are PMCs involved in violent criminal acts and human rights violations, but also non-violent crimes such as illicit arms trafficking, fraud, and corruption.


This source describes the attempts to regulate the private military and security industry and the current state of international law.


This source explains the rising use of PMCs by United Nations personnel for security purposes, invoking specific examples in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan.


This source provides a detailed history on the resurgence of mercenaries in the form of PMCs in modern warfare, analyzing their return as a consequence of new military developments.


This source is authored by a former employee of DynCorp and describes the extent and effects of DynCorp’s mission in Liberia as part of AFRI-COM.


This source thoroughly discusses the history of modern mercenary work and its roots in the post-colonial era. It also provides an overview of United Nations resolutions and international law regarding the matter.


This source discusses the rise of private security in Africa and its effects on African states.


This source explores the shrinking of modern militaries and speculates on the future of military growth.


This source is the AU Convention for the Elimination of Mercenaries, a cornerstone of the international law against the use of mercenaries.

This source explains the history of human rights issues in Equatorial Guinea and how the current political and humanitarian challenges are closely tied to the oil industry.


This source reports the leaking of several documents establishing ties between the head of the Wagner Group and the former President of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir.


This source reveals various uses of PMCs within multiple UN organs, and their current regulations when involved in humanitarian operations.


This source provides a detailed study of the major firms within the Russian PMC industry and analyses the differences between Russia and the West with regards to regulations.


This source explains the development of the mercenary industry from the classical era to today, including the contemporary shift from “Private Military Companies” to “Private Security Companies”. Moreover, it also reviews existing literature.


This source lauds the PMC industry for its attempts at self-regulation via the Montreux Document and ICoC, but argues that self-regulation is hardly sufficient for a for-profit industry. Since the industry is growing ever faster, the source calls upon States and relative actors to consider the future of the PMC industry and how they would like it to be, rather than simply regulating the current industry.


This source reports the rise of contractor employment in Afghanistan and Iraq by the US Department of Defense.


This source discusses the causes of the emergence of private security personnel throughout the world, their roles, and how they affect global inequality.

police-arms/private-military-security-companies/.

This source introduces a broad overview of the human rights abuses of PMCs and how they are classified under international humanitarian law.


This source further explains the use of PMCs and their legal status as combatants or non-combatants with particular attention to the USA-Iraq case. Then, it describes the steps that the industry and the ICRC has taken towards regulation via the Montreux Document.


This source is the Foreign Affairs Committee of the United Kingdom House of Commons’ report on the uses of PMCs in the UK and the options for regulation.


This source is the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, which provides the international legal definition of mercenarism.


This source reveals examples of contemporary PMC contracts and the types of work PMCs undertake.


This source warns of further growth in the PMC industry due to an increasing demand for security services as global instability rises as a result of climate change.


This source provides a broad overview of the history of PMCs and their different types. It is considered a cornerstone of PMC research and many other works on the subject reference this paper.


This source examines the employment of PMCs and their current regulations under international law, emphasizing their added relevance after their involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq.


This source researches the use of PSPs by humanitarian NGOs and the UN as global insecurity rises and establishes that such firms have been i-
creasingly employed in dangerous situations.


This source provides a summary of a US Congressional committee’s report, which criticizes the US State Department’s handling of multiple violations of criminal law, human rights, and employment contracts by PMCs from Blackwater.


This source warns of the potential use of child soldiers as PMCs or mercenaries and calls for stricter regulation of the two NSAs to protect the child rights.


Article describing how military expenditures have grown and been reallocated over the past few years.


This source reports on Russia’s confirmation that Russian PMCs are involved with training Sudanese forces as pro-democracy protests intensify.


This source describes the rapid efficiency with which PMCs turned the tides of war in their offensive against the terrorist group Boko Haram in Nigeria.


This source describes the court case against the Blackwater employees implicated at Nisour Square.


This source provides a good overview of the rapid emergence of contractors within US military and intelligence operations in the 1990s and early 2000s.


This source provides a detailed profile of the Wagner Group, a Russian private military company which is often employed to covertly fulfill Russian foreign policy objectives.
The National High School Model United Nations Conference (NHSMUN) is a project of IMUNA, a non-profit organization formally associated with the United Nations Department of Global Communications (UNDGC). IMUNA is dedicated to promoting global issues education through simulation.

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