**BIGMUN 2014**

TOPIC HANDBOOK

**1st committee of the General Assembly**

Disarmament and International Security

Avoiding nuclear proliferation in the Middle East

Nuclear proliferation is the act of transfer of nuclear weapons or intelligence concerning the production of nuclear weapons or their counterparts such as weapon-grade enriched uranium for nuclear warheads. In 1968 the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear weapons (NPT) was passed by the member states of the United Nations (came into effect in 1970) which resulted in a limitation in the transfer of nuclear weapons and nuclear intelligence between member states and thus lessened the risk of more countries obtaining a nuclear arsenal, all the while promoting peaceful uses of nuclear technology. Despite this treaty, several countries, especially in the Middle East have obtained knowledge on the building of nuclear weapons and begun building a nuclear arsenal. As an example, in 1998 a UN inspection uncovered and neutralized Iraq’s secret nuclear weapon arsenal. As the inspectors are not permanently stationed in Iraq since it has been invaded by the United States in 2003, there is a risk of the reconstitution of the nuclear arsenal by them.

Another nation, which has in recent years obtained sufficient information to build a nuclear arsenal, is Iran. Although due to technical difficulties they are years away from a full nuclear arsenal, they are still a threat to the disarmament of member states.

The PrepCom conference of 2013 (a preparatory conference for the 2015 NPT renewal conference) addressed nonproliferation of nuclear weapons, safeguards, and nuclear-weapon-free zones. Many countries argued that the Middle East zone should address general regional proliferation issues, rather than focus solely on the position of Israel which has neither signed the NPT nor allowed UN inspections inside their borders while it is known they possess a nuclear arsenal

**References:**

* <http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2008/12/nuclear%20proliferation%20riedel/12_nuclear_proliferation_riedel.pdf>
* <http://www.nti.org/treaties-and-regimes/treaty-on-the-non-proliferation-of-nuclear-weapons/>
* <http://www.globalresearch.ca/a-nuclear-free-zone-in-the-middle-east-why-israel-will-not-join-the-non-proliferation-treaty/5351738>

**Useful documents and resolutions:**

* Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Occupied territories of Azerbaijan

The Armenian-controlled territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh are legally and formally a part of Azerbaijan, however have been since 1993 occupied and controlled by Armenian forces and the Nagorno-Karabakh republic. In 1991, when the USSR disintegrated the internal dispute between the two member states became an international issue and it has not been resolved as of 2014.

Armenia has taken measures to prevent the re-taking and re-settling of the territories by expelled Azerbaijani locals by populating the area illegally with settlers of Armenian and Nagorno-Kabakh origin. Their numbers were reported to be raised to 300 000 by the year 2010, according to the Armenian re-settlement program.

Armenia has also taken measures to accumulate military power in the occupied territories. Besides their forces they have collected stores of weapons and ammunition, causing a threat to regional security in the area. Alarmed by these events, Azerbaijan has requested participation of the UN General Assembly on the matter. On 29 October 2004, the UN General Assembly decided to include the item entitled “The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan” to the agenda of its 59th session. On 11 November 2004, a report on the transfer of population into the occupied territories of Azerbaijan was submitted to the UN General Assembly. This has further raised international awareness of the issue.

The OSCE Fact-Finding Mission has visited the occupied territories from 30 January–5 February 2005 resulting in a report of the situation. The report confirmed the presence of illegal settlers and has laid groundwork for further actions on the issue. The issue of the situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan has been also included into the agenda of the subsequent sessions of the UN General Assembly.

On 7 September 2006, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution A/RES/60/285 entitled “The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan” as proposed by Azerbaijan in regard to the incidents of massive fires taken place in the occupied territories. The resolution stresses the necessity of the urgent conduct of the environmental operation, calls for assessment of the short-term and long-term impact of the fires on the environment of the region and its rehabilitation. For these purposes, the resolution emphasizes the readiness of the parties to cooperate and calls upon the organizations and programs of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Environment Program.

On 14 March 2008, the UN General Assembly adopted at its 62nd session resolution A/RES/62/243 on the situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. Seriously concerned that the armed conflict in and around the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan continued to endanger international peace and security, the UN General Assembly reaffirmed its continued strong support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders, demanding the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of all Armenian forces from all occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Assembly reaffirmed the right of the population expelled from the occupied territories to return to their homes. It has been also recognized the necessity of providing normal, secure, and equal conditions of life for Armenian and Azerbaijani communities in the Nagorny Karabakh region of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which would allow to build up an effective democratic system of self-governance in this region within the Republic of Azerbaijan. The General Assembly also reaffirmed that no state shall recognize as lawful the situation resulting from the occupation of the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan, nor render aid or assistance in maintaining this situation.

**References:**

* <http://www.azembassy.us/4/46.html>
* <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian-controlled_territories_surrounding_Nagorno-Karabakh>
* <http://www.un.org/en/ga/62/plenary/azerbaijan/bkg.shtml>

**Useful resolution and documents:**

* Report of the OSCE Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) to the Occupied Territories of Azerbaijan Surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh (NK)
* General Assembly Resolution A/RES/60/285
* General Assembly Resolution A/RES/62/243

Unexploded ordinance

Unexploded Ordinance (UXO) is any sort of explosive material (bombshells, hand grenades, landmines, bullets) that did not explode when originally deployed and now poses a potential danger to society in the area as it can explode at any point in time causing injury or death.

In 2010 the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor reported 4191 casualties due to unexploded ordinance in 60 of the United Nations’ member states. When looking just at civilian deaths, children account for nearly half of the deaths caused by UXOs. Most of these casualties occurred in countries recently stricken by conflict such as Afghanistan, Cambodia, Sudan and Pakistan.

Landmines and other UXOs impede post-conflict development by blocking access to land and resources as well as create a burden on society by endangering healthy individuals who could otherwise contribute to the workforce.

So far, the United Nations has put forward the International Guidelines for Landmine and Unexploded Ordnance Awareness Education in January 1999, which was a produced through a collaboration between several different UN organs such as UNSECOORD, UNICEF and UNDO. These guidelines are concerned with proper safety procedures and avoiding contact with UXOs. This includes identification and recognition of areas with danger of UXOs, emergency procedures related to them and assisting UXO victims and has an aim of raising awareness in affected areas. It is however clearly stated that the handbook is not a manual for finding, removal or disarmament of UXOs and landmines.

While education and awareness of UXOs is crucial to neutralizing the danger they pose, the UN has still much to do when it comes to removal of these devices.

**References:**

* <http://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/effects-of-conflict/landmines-cluster-munitions-and-unexploded-ordonances/>
* <http://members.iinet.net.au/~pictim/mines/unicef/mineawar.pdf>
* [www.eisf.eu/resources/](http://www.eisf.eu/resources/)

**Useful documents:**

* International Guidelines for Landmine and Unexploded Ordnance Awareness Education
* Landmine and UXO Safety Handbook