

Disarmament and International Security Committee



*Addressing the threat posed by Violent Non State
Actors using Biological and Chemical Weapons*

Letter from the Executive Board

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of the Executive Board, it gives us great pleasure to welcome you to DISEC at the TGES MDP MUN 2024. It is firstly imperative that every delegate thoroughly comprehends the contents of this background guide. Our main goal with this background guide is to ensure each delegate is accustomed to each aspect of this agenda. This background guide is not meant to be your only form of research and it is thereby expected that every delegate conducts their own research before the start of the conference.

Furthermore, it is important to note that during committee sessions, delegates are not permitted to cite the background guide as a source for their statements.

If you wish to use information from the guide, we expect you to cite the primary source from which the specific statements were derived. While it is acceptable to incorporate research from the background guide, we strongly encourage delegates to base the majority of their data and speeches from their own independent research.

We are eagerly awaiting the heated debates and discussions that DISEC is known for. We promise this conference for intellectual growth and we are confident that each of you will contribute to it.

Overview of the UN General Assembly

The UN General Assembly (UNGA) is the main policy-making organ of the United Nations. It requires all 193 member nations to come together once a year to discuss matters relating to the UN charter.

There are 6 key committees under the UNGA:

1. DISEC
2. ECOFIN
3. SOCHUM
4. SPECPOL
5. Administrative and budgetary
6. Legal

DISEC

The First Committee deals with disarmament, global challenges and threats to peace that affect the international community and seeks out solutions to the challenges in the international security regime. For more research look at www.un.org.

DISEC's mandate can be classified into 7 thematic areas:

1. Nuclear weapons
2. Other weapons of mass destruction
3. Outer space (disarmament aspects)
4. Conventional weapons
5. Regional disarmament and security
6. Other disarmament measures and international security
7. Disarmament machinery

About the agenda

What are Biological Weapons?

Biological and toxin weapons are either microorganisms like viruses, bacteria or fungi, or toxic substances produced by living organisms that are produced and released deliberately to cause disease and death in humans, animals or plants.

Biological agents like anthrax, botulinum toxin, plague, smallpox, tularemia, and viral hemorrhagic fevers can pose a difficult public health challenge causing large numbers of deaths in a short amount of time. Biological agents which are capable of secondary transmission can lead to epidemics.

An attack involving a biological agent may mimic a natural event, which may complicate the public health assessment and response. In case of war and conflict, high-threat pathogens laboratories can be targeted, which might lead to serious public health consequences. (WHO)

How are they delivered?

Delivery mechanism:

1. Historically, biological weapons have utilised a wide variety of delivery mechanisms.
2. Missiles, bombs, hand grenades and rockets have all been used as delivery mechanisms.
3. Vapours, injection systems, and other airborne systems have been developed for faster, widespread deployment.

What are chemical weapons?

A chemical weapon is a chemical used to cause intentional death or harm through its chemical properties. Any equipment specifically designed to weaponize toxic substances also falls under chemical weapons.

A chemical weapon when released by a delivery mechanism like an artillery shell, rocket, or ballistic missile, has the potential to cause devastation, harm, incapacitation, and sensory discomfort. The use of chemical weapons in armed conflict is prohibited by international law since they are classed as weapons of mass destruction.

The four main categories of chemical weapons are categorised based on the way they affect the human body.

Nerve agents:

Nerve agents can be breathed or absorbed via the skin and are typically thought to be the deadliest of the several types of chemical weapons. Nerve agents inhibit the body's respiratory and cardiovascular capability by causing severe damage to the central nervous system.

Blister agents:

Blister agents can be liquid, gas, or aerosol-based and result in severe burns and skin blistering. Additionally, they

can harm the digestive system and the respiratory system if they are swallowed or inhaled, respectively. Lewisite, Nitrogen Mustard, Sulphur Mustard, and Phosgene Oxime are examples of common blistering agents.

Choking agents:

Chemical toxins known as choking agents directly affect the body's respiratory

system when inhaled, leading to respiratory collapse.

Choking agents that are frequently used include phosgene, chlorine, and chloropicrin.

Blood agents:

Blood agents interfere with the haemoglobin in the bloodstream, preventing the transport of oxygen. Blood agents are generally inhaled and then absorbed into the bloodstream. Common forms of blood agents include Hydrogen Chloride and Cyanogen Chloride.

Who are Violent Non-State Actors?

Violent Non-State Actors are individuals or groups who do not belong/are not funded by the government wholly or partially. VNSAs can include terrorist organisations, drug cartels, mercenaries, pirates, criminal organisations etc.

For example:

1. The Taliban in Afghanistan
2. al-Qaeda, which was responsible for the 9/11 attacks.
3. Hezbollah in Lebanon which is currently in conflict with Israel

4. Hamas, which has occupied the Gaza Strip in Palestine.
5. Somali Pirates, who perform piracy off the Somalian coast.

Significant Incidents Involving Non-State Actors and Chemical/Biological Weapons:

1. **Salmonella poisoning (1984):** 751 people were intentionally infected with Salmonella, an agent that causes food poisoning, when followers of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh contaminated restaurant salad bars in Oregon, USA.
2. **Tokyo Subway Sarin Attack (1995):** The Aum Shinrikyo cult in Japan carried out a coordinated attack using sarin nerve gas on the Tokyo subway system. The attack resulted in the deaths of 13 people and injured thousands. Aum Shinrikyo aimed to instigate chaos and initiate an apocalyptic scenario.
3. **US Anthrax attacks (2001):** Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, several letters containing anthrax spores were sent to media organisations and politicians. The attacks resulted in the deaths of five people and raised concerns about the use of biological weapons by non-state actors. The investigation into the attacks led to a scientist working for the U.S. government's biodefense program as the primary suspect.
4. **Iraq and Syria (2014-2017):** The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) reportedly used chemical weapons, including chlorine and sulphur mustard, in both Iraq and Syria during their territorial control in certain areas. These incidents included attacks on civilians and military personnel, raising concerns

about the use of chemical weapons by non-state extremist groups.

5. **Salisbury Poisonings (2018):** Former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia were poisoned with a Novichok nerve agent in Salisbury, UK. The incident was attributed to Russian intelligence operatives and led to a diplomatic crisis between Russia and several Western countries. A British couple was also accidentally exposed to the same nerve agent, resulting in the death of one individual.

6. **The assassination of Kim Jong-Nam (2017):** The half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was assassinated at Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Malaysia using the nerve agent VX. The attack was allegedly carried out by two women on behalf of North Korean operatives. The incident brought international attention to the use of chemical weapons in targeted assassinations.

7. **Syrian Civil War (2011-present):** Various non-state actors, including extremist groups and rebel factions, have been accused of using chemical weapons during the conflict. The most widely publicised incidents include the 2013 Ghouta attack and the 2017 Khan Shaykhun attack, both involving the use of sarin gas.

Treaties:

1. **Biological weapons treaty (1972):**
The biological weapons treaty bans:

The development, stockpiling, acquisition, retention, and production of biological agents and toxins, weapons, equipment, and delivery vehicles.

The transfer of or assistance with acquiring the agents, toxins, weapons, equipment, and delivery vehicles described above.

The convention further requires states-parties to destroy or divert to peaceful purposes the agents, toxins, weapons, equipment, and means of delivery described above within nine months of the convention's entry into force.

The BWC does not ban the use of biological and toxin weapons but reaffirms the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which prohibits such use. There is also no ban on biodefense programs.(UNODA)

2. The Geneva Protocol (1925):

The Geneva Gas Protocol, officially known as the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, is an international treaty signed in 1925 by the majority of countries around the world.

Its purpose is to prohibit the use of chemical and biological weapons during warfare. The protocol was developed during the 1925 Geneva Conference as a response to the atrocities witnessed during World War I, aiming to prevent their repetition.

The protocol was built upon previous treaties that marked the end of World War I, particularly the Treaty of Versailles (1919) between the Allies and Germany. Its main focus was on prohibiting the use of asphyxiating, poisonous, or other gases, as well as bacteriological weapons in warfare. However, it did not ban the development, production, or stockpiling of such weapons. To address these gaps, the protocol was later complemented by the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in 1972 and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in 1993.

3. Chemical Weapons Convention (1993):

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is a multilateral treaty that bans chemical weapons and requires their destruction within a specified period of time. The treaty is of unlimited duration and is far more comprehensive than the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which outlaws the use but not the possession of chemical weapons.

CWC negotiations started in 1980 at the UN Conference on Disarmament. The convention opened for signature on January 13, 1993, and entered into force on April 29, 1997.

The CWC is implemented by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The OPCW receives states-parties declarations detailing chemical

weapons-related activities, materials, and relevant industrial activities. After receiving declarations, the OPCW inspects and monitors states-parties' facilities and activities that are relevant to the convention to ensure compliance.

Israel has signed but has yet to ratify the convention. Three states have neither signed nor ratified the convention (Egypt, North Korea, and South Sudan). The CWC requires states-parties to declare chemical industry facilities that produce or use chemicals of concern to the convention.

Prohibitions:

The Chemical Weapons Convention prohibits:

1. Developing, producing, acquiring, stockpiling, or retaining chemical weapons.
2. The direct or indirect transfer of chemical weapons.
3. Chemical weapons use or military preparation for use.
4. Assisting, encouraging, or inducing other states to engage in CWC- prohibited activity.
5. The use of riot control agents "as a method of warfare."

4. Biological Weapons Convention(1972):

The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) effectively prohibits the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons. It was

the first multilateral disarmament treaty banning an entire category of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

The BWC is a key element in the international community's efforts to address WMD proliferation and it has established a strong norm against biological weapons. The Convention has reached almost universal membership with 187 States Parties and four Signatory States.

Formally known as “The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction”, the Convention was negotiated by the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva, Switzerland.

It opened for signature on 10 April 1972 and entered into force on 26 March 1975. The BWC supplements the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which had prohibited only the use of biological weapons.

States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention undertook “never in any circumstances to develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire or retain:

1. microbial or other biological agents, or toxins whatever their origin or method of production, of types and in

quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes;
2. weapons, equipment or means of delivery designed to use such agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict.”

BWC States Parties have strived to ensure that the Convention remains relevant and effective, despite the changes in science and technology, politics and security since it entered into force. Throughout the intervening years, States Parties have met approximately every five years to review the operation of the BWC. Between these Review Conferences, States Parties have pursued various activities and initiatives to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the implementation of the Convention. A total of eight Review Conferences have taken place since the first one in 1980.

Provisions of the BWC:

Article I

Undertaking never under any circumstances to develop, produce, stockpile, acquire or retain biological weapons.

Article II

Undertaking to destroy biological weapons or divert them to peaceful purposes.

Article III

Undertaking not to transfer, or in any way assist, encourage or induce anyone to manufacture or otherwise acquire biological weapons.

Article IV

Requirement to take any national measures necessary to prohibit and prevent the development, production, stockpiling, acquisition or retention of biological weapons within a State's territory, under its jurisdiction, or under its control.

Article V

Undertaking to consult bilaterally and multilaterally and cooperate in solving any problems which may arise in relation to the objective, or in the application, of the BWC.

Article VI

Right to request the United Nations Security Council to investigate alleged breaches of the BWC, and undertaking to cooperate in carrying out any investigation initiated by the Security Council.

Article VII

Undertaking to assist any State Party exposed to danger as a result of a violation of the BWC.

Article X

Undertaking to facilitate, and have the right to participate in, the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and information for peaceful purposes.

These are only the key provisions of the BWC. There are 15 articles and delegates may read all of them.

Questions A Resolution Must Answer (QARMA)

1. How can you ensure transparency and trust amongst nations regarding Biological and Chemical Weapons?
2. What measures need to be enforced to ensure all member states abide by the clauses of the BWC and CWC?
3. Mechanism to identify the role of non-state actors in the regulation of these weapons?
4. What measures, if any, should be put in place in the event an intentional or an accidental bio/chem attack impacts another nation?
5. Regulation of “riot control agents”.

MUN Terms-

1.Rules of Procedure (RoP): The rules that dictate how to run a Model United Nations committee.

2.Decorum: A call to order. The chair will call for decorum if delegates get too loud or disrespectful.

3.Motion: How you ask for something in MUN in the official request form. You can motion for many different actions to guide the debate forward in a specific way.

4.Simple Majority: A vote that requires at least one over 50% of the vote to pass. Most procedural votes require a simple majority.

5.Blocs: Groups of delegates who agree on certain principles. These blocs will work together to write draft resolutions, which they later introduce and vote on.

Points & Inquiries

1.Point of Parliamentary Inquiry: A question from a delegate to the chair about the Rules of Procedure (RoP) or anything else they don't understand in the committee.

2.Point of Information: When a delegate asks a question of another delegate. These will take place after a delegate completes a speech on the Speaker's List when approved by the chair.

3.Follow-Ups: A request to ask a second question after having already asked one as a point of information.

4.Point of Personal Privilege: Can be called for when a delegate feels hindered by something outside of the debate, that is not covered by the

RoP. Examples can be going to the bathroom, room temperature and inability to hear another speaker.

5.Point of Order: Called by a delegate on another delegate, when the Rules of Procedure are not being followed.

6.Right of Reply: When a delegate feels their country was insulted during another delegate's GSL speech, they can ask for the Right of Reply.

1.Roll Call: A procedure performed by the chairs at the beginning of each committee session to know how many delegates are present in the room (for a simple majority and 2/3rds majority voting) and to know who is 'present' and who is 'present and voting'.

2.Present: What a delegate says when they are present in the committee and want to reserve the right to abstain on the final vote.

3.Present and Voting: What a delegate stays during roll call when they forgo their right to abstain. This means they can only vote for or against the draft resolution. This is usually done when they feel strongly about the topic.

Debate

1.Speaker's List: The Speaker's List, or General Speaker's List, is the default format of the committee. The Speaker's List is suspended when a motion for something else is passed by the committee.

2.Yield: Used in MUN for when a delegate finishes their speech with the extra time that needs to choose what to do with it. The delegate can yield, or give up, their time to:

The Chair: Meaning they give up the rest of their time.

Another Delegate: Another delegate gets to use the remaining time in their speech.

Question: The speaker will take questions and answer them with the remainder of their time.

3. Informal Debate: When delegates motion to leave the Speaker's List for a specific purpose. That can be speaking about a specific topic, speaking in a format moderated by delegates or lobbying and writing the draft resolutions. This is done through a Moderated Caucus, Unmoderated Caucus and Consultation.

4. Moderated Caucus: A less formal discussion on a subtopic within the general topic, chosen by a delegate and passed by a majority. Delegates raise their placards to offer Moderated Caucuses when the chair opens the floor to motions. Moderated Caucuses need to offer overall time, individual speakers' time and topic of discussion.

5. Unmoderated Caucus: Lobbying time. When motioning for an Unmoderated Caucus usually no topic is needed, only the general time requested for the unmoderated caucus. Once passed, delegates get out of their seats and move freely around the room. During this time they can lobby, negotiate with other delegates and blocs and write draft resolutions.

6. Consultation: An informal discussion where the delegate who is speaking chooses the next speaker. When motioning for a Consultation, you only ask for a general time. The delegate who motioned for the CotW speaks first for as long as they like.

7. Table: To suspend action or discussion until later.

Resolution Writing

1. Clause: A MUN clause is written instruction detailing the practical policy you want to implement if the resolution passes.

2.Draft Resolution: The final draft of a working paper where the blocs combined policy ideas are properly formatted and approved by the chair for both content and format. Once approved by the chair they can be discussed and, after the debate is closed, voted upon.

3.Sponsors: Delegates who were major contributors to the draft resolution. They are the ones who wrote the majority of the document. The number of sponsors is limited to two for this MUN.

4.Signatories: Delegates who support a draft resolution, or at least want to see it discussed. There is no limit on the number of signatories.

5.Preambulatory Clause: Clauses that explain why you are implementing the policies described in the Operative Clauses. Preambulatory Clauses are usually italicised and not numbered.

6.Operative Clause: Clauses that detail the policies / explain what the draft resolution is going to do. Operative clauses can go into detailed sub-clauses to properly convey the idea. The first words are italicised and each clause is numbered.

7.Amendment: A written change made to an operative clause. Amendments can change an existing clause, add a new one or delete a section, or an entire clause.

8.Friendly Amendment: A change to a clause approved by all the sponsors.

Unfriendly Amendment: A change to a clause that at least one sponsor does not agree to. These go to vote and are only added to the draft resolution that is passed with a majority in favour of the amendment.

Merging: When two or more draft resolutions are combined. This usually results in the blocs merging as well to give themselves more voting power.

Voting

Vote by Roll Call: A Motion to have each country declare verbally if they are “For”, “Against”, “Pass” or “Abstain.”

For: When a delegate casts their vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Against: When a delegate casts their vote against the draft resolution.

Abstain: When a delegate formally declines to vote either for or against the draft resolution.

Adjourn: A motion to completely end the committee session until the next conference.

Sources

[the United Nations](#)

[UNODA](#)

[Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons](#)

[Arms Control Association](#)

[Biological weapons](#)

[What are Biological Weapons? – UNODA](#) [What are](#)

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[Introduction | Nuclear Threat Initiative](#)

[Treaties and Regimes](#)

[United States Biological Overview](#)

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[The Biological Weapons Convention \(BWC\) At A Glance |](#)

[Arms Control Association](#)

[Impacts of non-state actors | Knowledge for policy](#)

[Geneva Gas Protocol | Definition, Purpose, & Limitations |](#)

[Britannica](#)

ENDNOTE-

Feel free to contact the EB members before, after and during the MUN sessions. Understand each sub-topic that has been chosen. Make sure to make your country look like it is the best one (no matter how big or small it is). Do justice to your role. Do not hesitate or panic about the conference, the EB is here to help you. ALL THE BEST!!!

Chair & Co-Chair,
Sohan Krishna Vallala and Samhitha Kaluri.