Sri Lanka
Model United Nations

UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

Study Guide

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UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

The United Nations Security Council is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations and is responsible for maintaining international peace and security. According to the Article 25 of the Charter, all members of the United Nations agree to accept and carry out the decisions made by the Security Council, making their decisions legally binding.

The very first session of the Security Council was held on January 17, 1946, at Church House, Westminster, London. Ever since the first session, the Security Council has had regular sessions, held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City, their permanent residence

The United Nations Security Council consists of fifteen members, of which five are permanent members. The ten remaining seats rotate on a two years basis. The permanent members are namely France, People's Republic of China, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, and the United States of America. Every member of the Security Council has one vote. However, the five permanent members have the right to veto, which means without their consensus, a resolution will fail. This right to veto is the cause of controversy and discord towards the Security Council due to its sensitive nature, as it may prevent swift action in case a conflicting political interest occurs with a permanent member and the current agenda of the Security Council.

Therefore, this makes the discussions and collective action in the Security Council highly challenging. The United Nations Security Council bears the power to act when international peace and security are at risk. In the moment of a crisis, the Security Council may try to reach an agreement by peaceful means. If such peaceful measures prove to be ineffective, the Security Council may take further action by issuing a ceasefire directive and/or military observation and deploy peacekeeping forces.

Security Council may also enforce measures such economic sanctions, or even a collective military action. Apart from the peace and security discourse, the Security Council recommends the appointing of the Secretary General to the General Assembly and also the admission of new members to the United Nations. Security council is also responsible for electing the judges of the International Court of Justice.

Given the chaotic nature of the world at present, with international crisis and peace-threatening developments by states and non-state actors in every direction; members of the Security Council are facing a monumental challenge. It is a critical task to pursue international peace, security and collaboration while respecting the sovereignty and tackling political agendas. In a globe with highly complex security threats and advancing, highly technical methods of combat, the Security Council wis tasked with resolving this proliferating nature of chaos.

THE AGENDA

Conference Topic: Scrutinizing the need for international legislature regarding the global use and propagation of LAWS (Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems)

Practice Debate Topic: Discussing the need to mitigate the movement of an epicenter of Islamic militant activity into the West African region.

CONFERENCE TOPIC: SCRUTINIZING THE NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL LEGISLATURE REGARDING THE GLOBAL USE AND PROPAGATION OF LAWS (LETHAL AUTONOMOUS WEAPONS SYSTEMS)

BACKGROUND

As we move further into the 21st century, the global i community has entered into a new era of warfare: a warfare that has progressed from the Kalashnikov to the Keyboard.

A common saying is that 'Guns do not kill people: people kill people'. In this technological era, it is the weapons make the decisions. When artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics come together, there are two different outcomes that can occur. One is a very positive outcome, of immeasurable social, economic and political improvements to our society. On the other hand, there is the outcome dominated by warfare. The militia may use this technology to create new weapons of mass destructions (LAWS) rendering even nuclear technology obsolete.

Recognizing the global threat caused by lethal autonomous weapons, 116 founders of robotics and artificial intelligence companies from 26 countries published an open letter urging the United Nations to ban lethal autonomous weapons systems. Accordingly, in 2016, under the power of the United Nation's Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), a Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems was established. The GGE mandate is tasked with examining emerging technological developments in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems. Yet, further measures are being requested to restrict and ban the use of LAWS.

Thus, it is the responsibly of the Security Council to create implement international laws governing fully autonomous weapons.

CASE STUDY

The U.S. Department of Defense defines Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems as '*a weapon system(s) that, once activated, can select and engage targets without further intervention by a human operator*.'

One could say that the term LAWS is self-explanatory. 'Lethal' means 'capable of causing death.', 'Weapons system' may referred to not only the actual weapon but also the methods of storage, transportation and delivery. In this situation 'Autonomous' would be technological autonomy; i.e. the ability of software to operate without human direction. An ability that allows machinery to replicate the human decision-making process by giving machines the capacity to process new information and reach an outcome, with no outside programming.

At present four types of lethal autonomous weapons are significant in their usage.

- BAE Systems Taranis Combat Drone
- Automated Sentry Guns
- Homing Missiles
- Radar-Guided Guns

Technology such as the homing missiles and Radar guided guns have been in use since the 1960s and 1970s respectively, though they have been developed over the years and are still used in modern warfare. For example; Afghanistan and Syria are both nations who have suffered the consequences of missile attacks in recent years.

When considering the Taranis Combat Drone, the program was initially launched to demonstrate the potential of an unmanned, low observable combat aircraft for the purpose of sustained surveillance; identifying targets, gathering vital intelligence, deterring an enemy and carrying out strikes in hostile territory. According to information from BAE, the Taranis can also target threats and is able to fire on that target on its own after a cue from a remote pilot.

Along with these incredible developments a number of questions are raised; safety, ethics and legality are just a dew. Artificial intelligence researchers fear that developing drones such as the Taranis will render humankind redundant on the battlefield. Humanitarian concerns like whether the target is near a school or a hospital are details that might not be picked up by an automated device. Therefore, the Taranis may act as a dangerous precedent for autonomous weapons.

At present there are no official resolutions on the banning of lethal autonomous weapons systems adopted by the UN General Assembly or the UN Security Council. However, the global community feels that the time has come to recognize that autonomous weapons that can "think" for themselves are not mere science fiction, but a revolutionary threat to international peace and security.

Accordingly, it is the task of the Security Council to contain the proliferation of autonomous weapons and implement international regulations to prevent misuse.

POINTS TO CONSIDER

- What are the countries affected by LAWS? And how severe was the impact?
- What steps can the UNSC take to mitigate the damage in the above point?
- Recognition of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems as a threat to international security.
- How can the UN investigate/prevent/mitigate potential malicious uses of Artificial Intelligence?
- The role of non-state actors in the use of Artificial Intelligence and Lethal Autonomous
- Weapons Systems.
- Self-defense; Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems in an armed attack?
- Guidelines that must be addressed in the new jurisdiction
- What other UN organs can aid in controlling the use of LAWS
- What are the other international and governmental bodies that can assist?

FURTHER READING

https://www.lawfareblog.com/lethal-autonomous-weapons-systems-first-and-second-un-gge-meetings

https://www.un.org/disarmament/update/pathways-to-banning-fully-autonomous-weapons/

http://time.com/4948633/robots-artificial-intelligence-war/

https://www.icrc.org/en/download/file/65762/autonomous_weapon_systems_under_international_humanitarian_law.pdf

PRACTICE DEBATE TOPIC: DISCUSSING THE NEED TO MITIGATE THE MOVEMENT OF AN EPICENTER OF ISLAMIC MILITANT ACTIVITY INTO THE WEST AFRICAN REGION.

BACKGROUND

The African continent for the past several years has continuously been at unrest as they constantly face the threat of terrorist activity and more specifically, that of several groups of Islamic Militant Activity. The harsh, rural geography and the constant socio-economic conditions in most of the continent provides a good breeding ground and safe-haven for these militant groups. Until now, the activity of these groups has mostly based their activity in the Central and Eastern Sahel region, which, true to its name, represents the transition between the Islamic cultures from North Africa and Christian beliefs from the South.

Considering the history of West African countries during last few decades after gaining independence, it shows the fragile nature of the region; a prime target for Islamic military extremism. Most of the ethnic and boundary related conflicts are remnants of colonization which the countries still deal with. The resulting millions of victims and refugees, ruined infrastructure, hunger and poverty, unstable political system, weak and corrupted governments have resulted in the creation of militant groups which easily gained popularity in their regions.

These groups formed for 2 reasons, either ethnic or religious. A major representative for the religious extremists are the militant Islamists, mainly originating from the Horn of Africa. For example, al-Qaeda's first major terrorist strike, the bombing of the U.S. embassies in 1998, occurred in Kenya and Tanzania. Since 90´s, numerous terrorist attacks and armed conflicts were held in the area. And of course, the Boko Haram, Al- Shabaab, jihadist terrorist organizations in cooperation with IS militants in the region and the weak governments.

This threat has begun spilling over into nearby countries and moving into West Africa. An alarming number of suspected terrorists have been arrested recently in the West African nations of Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal, the latter being historically one of the most stable nations in the region. Al-Qaeda militants in the area issued threats in West Africa, with one group singling out Senegal and Guinea, as a priority target.

CASE STUDY

In recent years countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea- Bissau have witnessed an uprising in the number of conflicts festered in heavy violence and ceaseless killings. While these corruptions are starting to seize there seems to be a surge in conflicts of the Sahel region, as mentioned previously where countries such as Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal show signs of the possible re-surfacing of internal and regional violent conflicts due to poverty, political corruption, humanitarian violence.

The rise in ethnic marginalisation and the proliferation of light arms has contributed to the socio-economic insecurities these nations are facing. Even though constant efforts have been made by actors the conflicts prevail and their significance increases. Due to these vulnerabilities and the presence of bad governance

in the countries of the Sahel region, extremist activists of the Islamic militant group seem to be aiming to seize control over these regions.

In 2013, the aggregate number of Islamic militant occurrences documented across the continent reared at 317, which is already a sizeable number for one year, but diminishes in contrast to the 1,549 attacks verified between April of last year and April of this year, a large percentage of which were compelled by the close immediacy with the Islamic State. At 879 Somalia has had the most attacks, of which responsibility falls on the terrorist group Al Shabaab who are known to be responsible for a major portion of the attacks as they continuously spread their agenda. 36% of the total incidents were recorded in West Africa, with Nigeria reporting 220 attacks, Mali reporting 194, and Cameroon reported 96.

"*Since the terror attacks in Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast, it has been clear that no country is completely immune. Anywhere there are embassies, international organizations, multinationals — and especially Westerners — there are targets*," Vincent Foucher, research fellow at France's National Centre for Scientific Research specializing in the Sahel Region.

The terrorist groups in the vicinity has all but added fuel to the fire. Suspected terrorists on trial in Senegal were trained under Boko Haram, some directly under their leader; while others were possibly connected to extremist groups in Libya and northern Mali.

"Africa shall be free from armed conflict, terrorism, extremism, intolerance and gender-based violence as a major threat to human security, peace and development."
Agenda 2063 of African Union

POINTS TO CONSIDER

- What steps can be taken to break down the Network of Extremist Groups in Africa?
- An International/regional Framework to Address Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa?
- What steps can be taken to mitigate civilian distress when responding to violent extremism?
- Civilian preparations
- How can other UN and regional bodies assist?
- Are there any alternative approaches to countering terrorism/extremism?
- Considering soft power approaches (such as mediation)

FURTHER READING

https://www.consultancy.africa/news/827/militant-activity-is-rising-across-sub-saharan-africa-particularly-in-the-west

https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2017/10/25/africa-becomes-new-battleground-isis-and-al-qaeda-they-lose-ground-mideast/796148001/

https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-24587491