



A Background Guide for the

FIRST COMMITTEE OF  
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
DISEC

**Preventing Arms Race in Outer Space**

**Regulating the Transfer of  
Conventional Weapons in the Middle East**

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## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Dear Delegates,

It gives the Executive Board of the DISEC Committee, Chairpersons Parv Golwelkar and Nitya Vyas, and Rapporteur Zubin Turakhiya, immense pleasure to invite you all to the Shishukunj Model United Nations 2017.

The executive board firmly believes that Model United Nations have a plethora to offer. They give immense exposure, which is a bare necessity of today's time. They teach us to respect other's ideas, help us maintain equilibrium in the society, improvise on expression and more importantly generate a logical rational thinking; Consequently, they help us build numerous soft skills which are essential for a person's well being. MUNs play a pivotal role in all dynamics and dimensions of a person's life by offering a huge platform for social interactions, ideation and development. Shishukunj Model UN will not only serve the aforementioned but also provide unimaginable insights.

The delegates in the DISEC Committee in particular are expected to be pragmatic in their approach; they must respect and appreciate the ideas of development of other delegates ,so it is undoubtedly the responsibility of the delegates to voice out the concerns and various ideas of development while factually promoting or discarding them. The discussions and the debates should be meaningful and must not develop into unfounded arguments . The delegates must realise that they are responsible for bringing in a change; a change significant enough to not only eliminate the deleterious effects of crises but aid in development and progression. It is imperative for the delegates to be well researched and know the crises in detail or concept. The delegates must appreciate the heterogeneous 'think-tank' and must yield a result. The facts, ideas and thoughts so generated should be taken care of while maintaining high level of precision and accuracy. Also, the board believes that virtues and ideas of mutual understanding, cooperative working, goal oriented and divergent thinking are significant for a constructive outcome.

The Shishukunj Model UN will serve appropriately for your intellectual entertainment and offer deep life changing insights while making you a global ,concerned ,aware ,innovative and a model citizen. This experience will always remain fresh throughout your life ,and we as the executive board are committed to make your indulgence 'Muntastic'.

Thank you and regards

The Executive Board

Parv Golwelkar and Nitya Vyas - The Chairpersons

Zubin Turkiya - The Rapporteur

## Committee Background

The First Committee of the United Nations, the Disarmament and Security 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.

It 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; the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments; and promotion of cooperative arrangements and measures aimed at strengthening stability through lower levels of armaments.

The Committee works in close cooperation with the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament. It is the only Main Committee of the General Assembly with verbatim records coverage.

### Agenda 1: Preventing Arms Race in Outer Space

#### 1.1 Background of the Agenda

Humans have a few of resources at their disposal which include: mineral resources, water resources, natural resources, (humans themselves) and others. In this essential list, Outer Space has been added recently. As soon as information about a new resource and ideas about our future by its utilisation

came, the human tendency to venture took over. While exploring and venturing, indirect attempts to claim ownership like deploying satellites for unwarranted purposes, meddling and others were noticed. This alarming situation of claiming ownership over our common heritage has forced the international community to formulate laws and specify limits. The ideal organisation which could monitor as well as regulate the advancements in this sector stands out to be the United Nations. This being the reason the agenda of 'Preventing the Arms Race in Outer Space' has been chosen.

When organisation claim to be progressive, then all the actions undertaken by the organisation must adhere to its growth oriented and progressive claim, furthermore, reflect such principles in all its actions. Formation of doctrines that challenge such socialist ideologies - that of ownership of means of production, distribution and exchange being in the hands of the community as a whole - have been presented innumerable times. Demand for the monopolistic rights and authority over the Space by certain nations is practically a significant part of the problem. Undoubtedly, it is impossible for an unethical bid to take form, considering the transparency and accountability our international organisation offers. If the role of the United Nations - monitoring such actions is recognised further and recalled by formulation of revised doctrine (as a priority) - it will be instrumental in reducing militarisation for unwarranted purposes. The committee can chose as to which areas under the agenda have to be worked more upon i.e. more specifications and documents are required. For example in investments, satellite launchings, entry of private organisations etc.

Certain Nations have set up independent organisations for the purpose of venturing and exploring the space. When negligible documents monitoring developments in outer space existed, an action could not be classified as right or wrong since there were no laws. At that time a few organisations placed satellites, which were questioned for spying. This period in the late 20th century gave rise to wide spread discussions on the ethicality of space programmes and their developments as such. The political activist ( "A quote by Al Franken." Goodreads. ) Al Franken quoted "It is easier to wear slippers than carpet the whole world" and when even a single nation is responsible for unethical, and not development-oriented activities, a domino effect is inevitable.

## 1.2 Involvement of Arms in Outer Space

The arms race has been dragged in every field expertise has been gained in, ranging from sea to the skies. It certainly becomes the responsibility of the United Nations to prevent the possibility of arms race in the outer space.

Though spying and venturing satellites might sound 'James Bond like' in the late 1900s but all such practices are now widely experienceable and practical. Even private companies like Google and Tesla have involved themselves in this 'business' which is claimed to bring prosperity and modernity to the mankind by enabling satellite tracking and mapping, aiding immensely in communication etc. There is no doubt that venturing space has been very useful communication, medical sciences, research and the game of predictions have been strengthened and cure to age old problems like that of lack

of communication, uncertainty etc have been erased off to an extent. It is evident that this venturing will be useful for the global community as unimaginable positive developments like those mentioned above have taken birth and set of new ambitions for humans. The space programmes have a unique blessing, it seems as if only the funding is managed by the sponsoring nation while the benefits are received by everyone. When countries celebrate success of their successful mission (like that of Apollo), they must not ignore satellite hackings. When attempts to venture the space came at comparatively low costs (like that Chandrayaans and Mars Orbital Missions), failed private bids must not be ignored (initial failed attempts by private organisations like Tesla). While trying gives the best possibility for succeeding, it becomes the nation's responsibility to keep on investing in new innovative ideas for venturing the space and invest, only in development oriented activities, appropriately.

## 1.3 Limitations

Venturing outer space is certainly a highly debatable topic; nations have their different view points and very different ideas of development -which might be often conflicting- this very situation demands for drawing common consensus. It becomes the responsibility of nations to present their ideas of development and understand ideas of other nations. This must happen while keeping the idea of 'exploring and not exploiting' above everything else. Nations must also collectively ignore all prospects of indulging into an arms race. All to be mastered is self control ( self control can play a crucial role in judging and self-analysing activities as developmental or destructive).

The current situation can be currently compared to the one where a caravansary has to carry a few gold fishes swimming in his bottle to the desert empire where fishes were never seen. He ignores his thirst in turn of a magnanimous reward. He later gives up by drinking the water, killing all the fishes. His reward is lost and thirst is barely quenched. Parallels can be drawn between the tale and the scenario today where power prioritising the idea of development of a nation.

Taking statistics into considerations, Organisations like Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) amongst others, have successfully conducted orbital missions. Indian Space Research Organisation has claimed accolades for making the similar orbital mission possible at costs which are not sky rocketing, mere \$70 million as against \$670 million for Mars Atmosphere and Volatile Evolution (MAVEN).

Such achievements indicate a drastic reduction in allotment of finances for space programmes. This very fact makes it further easy to venture or misuse. The seeds of arms race are being sown deep when the developments in outer space are taking form. It becomes the responsibility of the United Nations to remove the seeds before the idea becomes self sufficient to allow arms race from being a possibility.

Until the international community formulates laws for venturing the Outer Space, absolutely no progress will be witnessed. Probability of an arms race in outer space has increased over time, making the nations prioritise this topic. Similar situations had risen when the question of jurisdiction of celestial bodies was being discussed. An

important outcome to this debate was the 'Outer Space Treaty'. The Outer Space Treaty still plays a pivotal role in preventing countries from claiming the jurisdiction of celestial bodies.

The ability of a developing nation to undertake a herculean task of enabling a 'a few metre long' object to enter the orbit for questionable tasks and at such costs is defiance to outmoded declarations. In the 21st century specifically, International ties have been given appropriate importance. While ties and treaties for functioning have become common, Multi-lateral and bilateral 'comforting' treaties are being signed more than earlier.

(The United Nations websites also offer abundant amount of information on the same. A few essential links that will help the delegate to understand the background further and venture into the details of the topics have been provided on the last page of the guide.)

## 1.4 Urgency of the Issue

The idea while discussing this urgent topic is to maintain a fine but prominent line between promoting an arms race, commercialisation and venturing. As a courtesy, all nations must mandate, make their intentions clear and understand as to what is permitted and what is legal but unethical. Deploying launch satellites for warfare, satellites primarily for spying *inter alia* lie under unethical as well as not supported by law. Primary objective of each and every participating nation must be to prevent an arms race in outer space.

The United Nations has formed many sub committees, held numerous sessions to discuss this agenda and worked to a certain degree but unfortunately the problems still persist. It is definite that the solution to this issue can be provided

by discussions and debate only and certainly not military might and other destructive tactics. Opportunities for debate should be utilised to the maximum amount. On comparison note - the amount of debate has been certainly in a lower degree than other equally widespread problems.

Nations must understand that every moment not used for debating and updating, The nations are probably losing control proportionally and probably handing out the common resource of space to the destructor and not discoverer. Reviewing the resolutions to the finest detail will result in extremely viable and creative solutions being laid out in front of the delegates themselves. The resolutions apart from addressing the issue of a possible arms race in outer space and others which have consequently taken birth like that of limitless usage and exploitation, deploying satellites mean for spying and other unwarranted purposes and others, the resolution must also include ideas of alternative spending for space exploration, increasing funding and investment for developmental purposes, accepting or rejecting the involvement of private organisation and others.

## 1.5 Developments and Expectations

If the development of space related activities continues at the same pace, It can be possibly inferred that involvement in space will act as a game changer, these assumptions are existent because of the uncertainty space offers. If the discoveries and developments turn

to be beneficial, Its is possible that the space industry will become significant far beyond its' years. Everything has changer manifolds since these topics were debated upon and some conclusions were taken out. The committee is not only expected to come up with updated resolutions and new strategies to handle upcoming issues, it is advised to work for a common goal of developing and not destructing.

United Nations Office for Outer Space has been pivotal in execution of innumerable treaties and orders as such. While this body has its defined roles and so mentioned tasks, all the nations have to work while adhering to United Nations Charter. Any sort of deviation form all sorts of policies is noting but to challenge the United Nations itself.

There are a million dimensions through which this issue can be viewed and the excitement is to see how negotiations, compromises and debates are held for what is not known completely. All the commonly available resources (a lot have been listed below) have plethora of documents, official papers, researches, updates, problems and issues, news, statements, goals and positions, stances, progress and demands etc. the skill is to reach out to all that is possible and resolve an upcoming turbulence and that too in a limited amount of time. The trick is to not be<sup>1</sup>at around the bush.

This issue has to be dealt at the earliest and for coming up with the most ideal of the solutions, negotiating should be the key strategy for all the delegates.<sup>1</sup> Later in the previous year, President Obama made us recall that - "Ignorance is not a virtue." Though his intentions were

<sup>1</sup> (Helmore, Edward. "Obama delivers commencement speech at Rutgers: 'Ignorance is not a virtue'" The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, 15 May 2016. Web. 16 June 2017.

<<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/may/15/barack-obama-commencement-speech-donald-trump>>.

different then ,but his statement is an adage. We have to let our principles govern our actions and transform us (at least the diplomats) into practical idealists. Just imposing a limit on our motives is the need of the hour, which if catered to at the right time will prove that progress not only influences our habits, environment or the space but also our virtues and ideas as humans.

## 1.6 Important Stances and Contradicting Opinions

While prevention of arms race in outer space is an agenda that aptly finds itself related to almost all the agendas that the mankind is facing today. Technological advancements going beyond our control, monopoly over international institutions, widespread arms race, ignorance to the mistakes committed in the past and what not. Considering the fact above, most nations will trick themselves into believing that their stances will remain similar to the ones practiced on other issues. While it is essential to clear that the stances of nations on other issues will play insignificant role when the issue of 'Prevention of Arms Race in The Outer Space' is raised. Nations are expected to uphold the idea of reaching to a conclusion by negotiations, cooperation and agreement.

Conflicting opinions will rise and should rise in a committee when ideas about centralisation of power and establishment of monopoly will be discussed. So a key goal of all the participating nations must be is to have the rights and powers distributed equally, efficiently and democratically.

Nations must consider themselves

responsible for the development of Outer Space and they must adhere to all the outcomes the committee decides to work upon. Most important characteristic that will ensure some practical, ideal and a

pragmatic outcome is taken out, ability to negotiate and reach to a common consensus will be the game changers. It is undoubtedly crucial for all the delegates to be well versed with the issue stated earlier along with the stances and positions of countries in general.

### Developed Nations

Its seems that developed nations will promote accessing and utilising space without limits as such but the problem will arise when a multitude of nations will start demanding the same things.

This very probable though hypothetical example quotes that it is not possible for the economically and militarily powerful nations to dominate in a committee where this agenda will be discussed, giving the liberty to all the nations to voice out their concerns and all ideas possible.

### Developing Nations

Developing Nations will have a very crucial role to play in the committee; It will be their responsibility to monitor the direction in which the debate is going. Though a lot of nations have their space programmes established, a few deem it necessary to commence their programs as well. While these are the countries where resources are limited, its all a game of prioritisation. Is it important to have a space programme when a large chunk of population is

devoid of basic necessities? or it is important to remain at par with the leading nations in a field which will become highly influential in a matter of time? While the answer is subjective, the outcome must be objective.

In order to prevent resources from being used up in matters and fields which do not remain a priority. The group of developing nations will have the privilege to modify the clauses as they deem necessary and more importantly as their policies and conditions deem it to be necessary.

All the participating nations will have equal importance considering the space to be a common heritage. It is an assurance that no nation will feel alienated because of no reason whatsoever. Developing nations have

limited resources as compared to a few. Because of such an issue, they have a habit to explore all the options and then decide as to which one should be resorted to so that least but sufficient resources are utilised and the work is done as per need. Such a tendency will deepen their involvement and make their statements pivotal in influencing the direction of debate in the committee.

### Underdeveloped Nations

Similar to the role played by the developing nations, underdeveloped nations will play an important role in influencing the debate. The idea of development and priorities are different to a certain extent from the ideas of the developed countries. The Underdeveloped nations will have the opportunity to voice out their concerns and influence the debate for the fact that the developed nations cannot alienate this important group of countries

because of the democratic form of discussion and consensus.

Space remains to be a common heritage, and all sorts of developments and destructions will result in degradation or upliftment for all without direct or indirect involvement. This ensures that even without elaborate or any space programme at all, the nations will have the opportunity to protect their heritage without any sort of financial or military loss and also get an opportunity to form a comfortable niche for the nations by resorting to various healthy tactics.

### Allied Nations and Nations with Existing Bilateral and Multilateral Policies

It will be extremely interesting to know and follow the track the committee chooses to go on for prevention of arms race in outer space. Nations with exiting elaborate space programmes will aid immensely in formulation of doctrines considering the mission specific information being at their disposal (eg. information regarding Mars Orbital mission can be used to set limits and standards). The governments the nations will be solely responsible to modify their stances and practices according to the outcome and what is pledged in the committee.

Nations that are part of a few organisations like the European Union(EU), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) that will have already considered various missions for a uniform development of their regions and beyond, and are advised to suggest the successful measures during the 3-day

debate as well so that all possible options by nations with common ideologies will be explored.

## 1.7 Resolutions and Their Main Objectives

Links to multiple resolutions have been provided. The delegates are expected to go through most of the resolutions that are directly in relation to the agenda (the links to which have been provided) and browse through the rest.

While we sometimes find ourselves to come up with brilliant solutions that might work appropriately and meet the necessary requirements. It is natural to feel disappointed when it is found that the clauses have already been implemented and worked upon (Kudos if they succeeded!). To prevent such disappointment from pestering anyone from our committee, the delegates are suggested to know and keep a track of solutions that are already a part of other resolutions.

If any idea or suggestion is to be repeated, a different suggestion or a clause that works parallel to the existing clauses will be appreciated if the committee chooses to bring them forward.

## 1.8 Main Idea

In the entire study guide, the current situation was explained and a widespread confusion (of resorting to different paths to reach a common goal where all possibilities of an arms race are ruled out is reached) was highlighted, so as to ensure that the reader was aware of the entire situation that is unfolding gradually.

The main idea remains to put an end to the ongoing arms race in the outer space and creatively, democratically and constructively reach to common consensus. Skills to negotiate and out of the box thinking will be the ones which will receive the most appreciation when the discussion of this dynamic agenda is on.

There are a variety of ways and dimensions through which the ongoing budding problem can be viewed. Similarly a variety of suggestions and ideas will find themselves being intensely debated upon. The idea that covers the most aspects and dimensions, will be the one lauded most.

## 1.9 Questions a Resolution Must Answer

1. How is the committee going to ensure equal access of the space to all the nations immatter of their developmental status?
2. What will be regarded as unwarranted and what permissible practices can be held by the nations?
3. How will the countries that venture in the space for wrong dos be reprimanded?
4. What measures will be taken to stop the existing malpractices and more importantly end the widespread confusion, of choosing the path to reach the common goal of ruling out possibilities, of a possible arms race in outer space?
5. How will the committee ensure that private biddings are in sync with official governmental bids?
6. What measures will be taken to ensure that a deserving appropriate

attention will be given to this agenda constantly?

7. What measures should the UN take for a wider reachability of the direct benefits of the space programs to an international community?

8. If the committee believes arms race in outer space to be essential, then how can the limits be set?

9. What can be done to make the governments more accountable and responsive towards their motives behind their space programs?

10. What measures will be taken to prevent this problem from worsening in future?

11. What innovative laws and statutes can be introduced to flip the entire arms race?

12. Should the defaulters (nations that do not abide by the documents so signed in the committee) be introduced to certain harsh penalties? If yes, then what penalties and what all is at stake?

## 1.10 Further Recommended Research

1. [https://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/67/113](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/67/113)

2. <http://www.nti.org/learn/treaties-and-regimes/agreement-governing-activities-states-moon-and-other-celestial-bodies-moon-agreement/>

3. <http://www.nti.org/learn/glossary/#launch-registration-convention>

4. <https://www.un.org/press/en/2010/gadis3421.doc.htm>

5. <https://www.un.org/disarmament/topic/s/outerspace/>

6. <http://www.globalissues.org/article/69/militarization-and-weaponization-of-outer-space>

7. <http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/spacelaw/resolutions.html>

8. <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/fact-sheets/critical-issues/5448-outer-space>

9. <http://www.globalissues.org/article/69/militarization-and-weaponization-of-outer-space>

1. <http://disarmament.un.org/treaties/t/moon/text>

2. <http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/spacelaw/nationalspacelaw/bi-multilateral-agreements.html>

3. <http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/spacelaw/nlbcompendium.html>

4. <http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/copuos/lsc/2017/index.html>

5. <http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/copuos/comm-subcomms.html>

## Agenda 2: Regulating the Transfer of Conventional Weapons in the Middle East

### 2.1 Key Terms

#### 1. Conventional Weapons:

Conventional Weapons encompass a wide range of equipment not limited to armoured combat vehicles, combat helicopters, combat aircraft, warships, small arms and light weapons, landmines, cluster munitions, ammunition and artillery. Conventional weapons are the most common type of armament globally and historically the most commonly used in conflict.

**Note:** Nuclear Weapons and Weapons of Mass Destruction do not come under this category.

2. SALW: Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) is a term used in arms control protocols to refer to two main classes of weapons:
3. Small arms: hand-held small caliber firearms, usually consisting of handguns, rifles, carbines, shotguns, manual, semi-automatic, and full automatic weapons and man-portable machineguns.
4. Light weapons: Includes a wide range of medium-caliber and explosive ordnance, including man-portable and vehicle-mounted antipersonnel, antitank and antiaircraft rockets, missiles, grenade launchers, rocket launchers, landmines, antiaircraft guns, mortars, hand grenades and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), and so on.

5. ATT: The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is an international treaty that regulates the international trade in conventional arms and seeks to prevent and eradicate illicit trade and diversion of conventional arms by establishing international standards governing arms transfers.

6. UNROCA: United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. The Register is an important tool, giving practical significance to the concept of 'transparency in armaments'.

### 2.2 Topic History and Background

#### 1. Introduction:

The Middle East is amongst the most volatile regions of the world. The Middle East comprises of Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

In recent years, the levels of military expenditure and arms imports in the Middle East have increased drastically. Several states in the region are modernizing their military equipment holdings, and this has been accentuated further due to ongoing regional conflicts. Israel is the only major exporter in these areas, and the remaining countries are all importers – whose military standing depends largely on the conventional weapons exported by developed countries like the US, which itself is amongst the largest exporters of conventional weapons in the world.

Due to strong economic growth and high oil prices, huge imports are easy. The imported arms have been used by

both state and non-state groups in recent conflicts like the ones between Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon, between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip, in Yemen in the ongoing Yemeni Crisis, in the Syrian Civil War, in the Sinai insurgency in Egypt, and in several other conflicts which have purged human life in innumerable ways.

From governments to civilians involved in conflicts – all of them have been accused of violations of international humanitarian law. Transparency in international arms transfers is very limited in these regions because of the diversion of Small Arms and light weapons to armed groups both within and outside the region, which further fuels conflicts, like the ones in Iraq, Somalia and Turkey.

There are extensive stocks of small arms and light weapons in the Middle East, including large stocks for military, police, and other security force, and, in many countries, a high level of individual ownership. In many cases, the wide availability of SALW carries a high risk of diversion to conflicts within and outside the countries of origin. However, information on the total conventional weapon stock and on international flows of weaponry, both licit and illicit, is extremely limited.

The Middle East accounted for 21 percent of world imports of major conventional weapons during 2004–2008, almost the same as during 1999–2003, according to SIPRI Databases.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Freeman, Sam Perlo. "Arms Transfers to the Middle East." <https://www.sipri.org/>. July 2009. Accessed May 2017.

<https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/files/misc/SI-PRIBP0907.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> "Human Cost of Illicit Flow of Small Arms, Light Weapons Stressed in Security Council Debate | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases." United Nations. Accessed May 2017.

Denial of education and health, criminality, illicit plundering of natural resources, decreased trade and investment, violence against women and girls, gang violence, and the collapse of the rule of law are facilitated by widespread access to the weapons. As stated by high commissioner for Human Rights - Zeida Ra'ad al Hussein - arms profiteering was the partner of war crimes.<sup>3</sup>

According to a recent report on the issue, the widespread availability of weapons was a major factor in the over 250 conflicts of the past decade, leading to more than 50,000 deaths each year and record levels of displacement.<sup>4</sup> Denying access to illegal weapons deprives armed groups and extremists of a central means to perpetrate violence intimidation and harm.

With women and girls among the major victims of the violence perpetrated with illegally traded conventional arms, it is vital that an arms trade treaty take into account and contain specific gender-based violence criterion.

## 2. The UNROCA:

### a) What is the UNROCA?

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (UNROCA) was established in 1991 and is managed by the UNODA. UNROCA was established to 'enhance confidence,

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc11889.doc.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> "Human Cost of Illicit Flow of Small Arms, Light Weapons Stressed in Security Council Debate | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases." United Nations. Accessed May 2017.

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc11889.doc.htm>.

promote stability, help States to exercise restraint, ease tensions and strengthen regional and international peace and security” and “to prevent the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of arms . . . in order to promote stability and strengthen regional or international peace and security’.<sup>5</sup>

All UN member states are requested to provide to this register, information on exporting and importing state, number of units transferred, and intermediate state or state of origin for all imports and exports of: battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, large-calibre artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships, and missiles or missile launchers. States are also invited to submit information on their holdings and procurement from domestic production of major conventional weapons, as well as imports and exports of small arms and light weapons.

## b) Introduction to Issues with the UNROCA

The Middle East was the original reason for establishing UNROCA, despite the fact that large-scale arms procurement is an important element in the region’s security situation, Turkey was the only state to report from the region for 2014. Israel, which in the past was the one country in the region that reported every year, stopped reporting by 2013. Saudi Arabia, the largest importer in the region, has never submitted a report. Qatar has not reported on actual imports either.

The Middle East has all it takes to frustrate international arms control regimes. Key regional actors do not

recognize one actor’s right to exist, let alone share diplomatic relations. Countries in the region perceive their own security as requiring the insecurity of others, leading them to adopt offensive military postures. At the same time, there is virtually no regional arms control culture or constituency since the pre-existing laws, registers, and treaties are not binding enough.

Following the low participation trend of 2012-14, 2015 was another disappointing year for transparency in arms transfers. Despite friendly reminders being sent to UN Member States in February 2015, only 35 out of 193 reports were submitted. These figures were like alarm bells for the UNROCA and suggested that reporting could reach an all time low in 2016.

Another area of concern was the fact that several of those few reports did not contain data that matched with the indiscriminate of weaponry in their respective countries and for some reports the reported transfers didn’t match.

One major loophole that the UNROCA hasn’t been able to combat is the fact that several countries report the contract signing date and the others the transfer date which often leads to reporting in different years and sometimes contracts contain more items than the number actually shipped, which may be due to the breakdown of a particular weapon.

<sup>5</sup> "Transparency: UN Register." SIPRI. Accessed April 2017. <https://www.sipri.org/research/armaments->

[and-disarmament/international-arms-transfers/transparency/un-register.](https://www.sipri.org/research/armaments-and-disarmament/international-arms-transfers/transparency/un-register.)

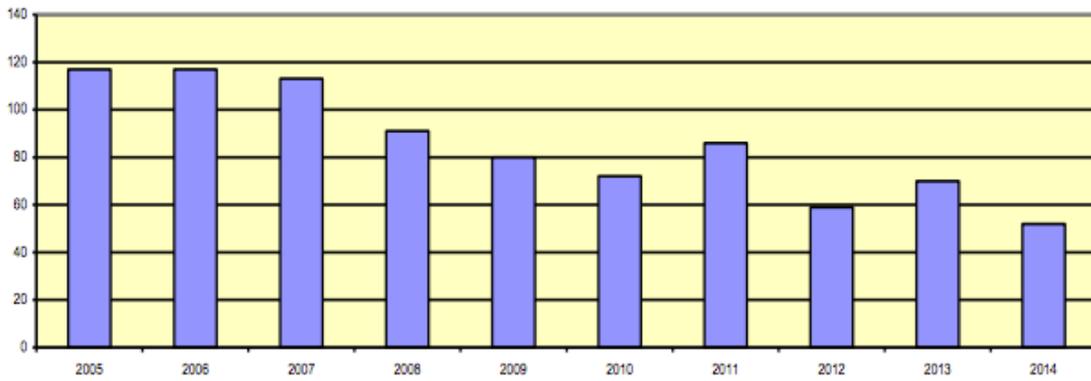


Figure 1 shows the decline in global participation in the UNROCA from 2005-2014. This decline is clearly alarming.

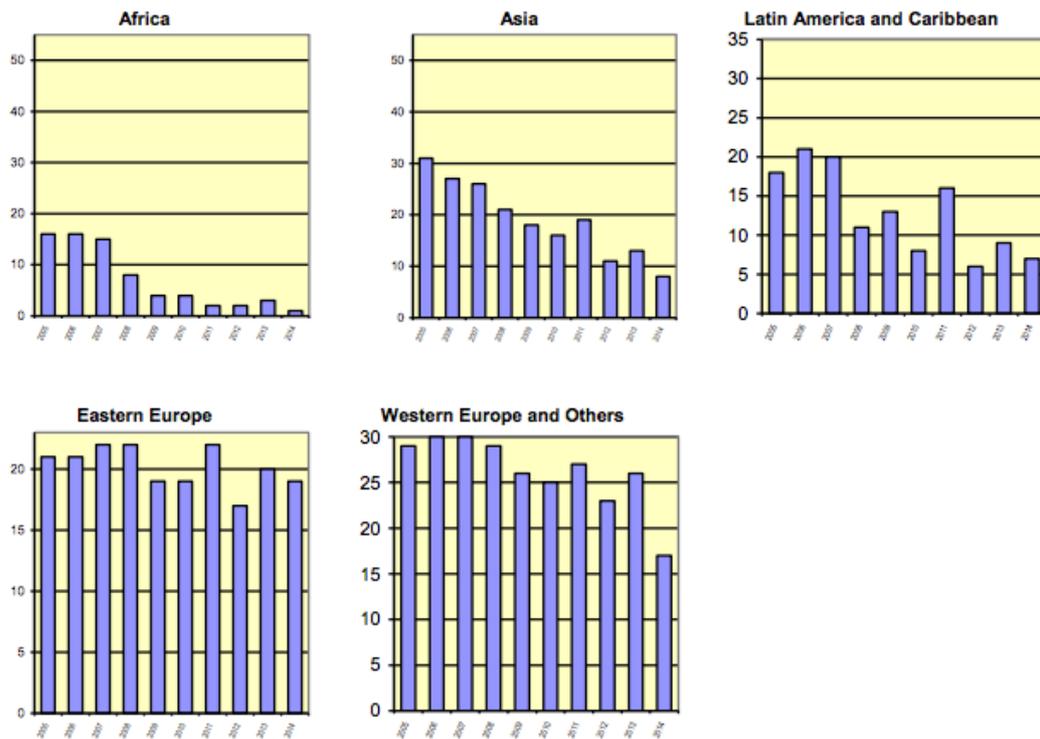


Figure 2 shows regional participation numbers from 2005-2014 and although Africa has the least participation, the greatest decline in participation is shown by the Asian Region, and it continues to decline.

### c) The Arms Trade Treaty:

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is a multilateral, legally-binding agreement that establishes common standards for the international trade of conventional weapons and seeks to reduce the illicit arms trade. The treaty aims to reduce human suffering caused by illegal and irresponsible arms transfers and improve regional security and stability, as well as to promote accountability and transparency by state parties concerning transfers of conventional arms. The ATT is not an arms control treaty and does not place restrictions on the types or quantities of arms that may be bought, sold, or possessed by states. It also does not impact the state's domestic gun control laws or other firearm ownership policies.

#### i. What the Arms Trade Treaty Does:

- The treaty requires all state parties to adopt basic regulations and approval processes for the flow of weapons across international borders. It also establishes common standards that must be met before arms exports are authorized.
- It prohibits the arms transfer authorizations if the transfer violates certain obligations under measures adopted by the Security Council.
- It requires states to assess the potential that the arms exported could be used to facilitate serious violations of laws and also take measures to prevent diversion of arms.

The treaty came into force on 24 December 2014, and at this stage it has a total of 92 state parties and 130 signatory states.

Even though the ATT was a comprehensive and well-thought document, it has failed to gain popular support. Likewise, most states in the region remain uncertain as to the merits of an arms trade treaty. In December 2008, only 4 Middle Eastern states—Jordan, Lebanon, Oman and Turkey—voted in favor of the UN General Assembly resolution on establishing an ATT, with the other 11 abstaining.

### d) Case Studies:

#### Yemen

The conflict began in November 2011, when long-time authoritarian president Ali Abdullah Saleh was forced to hand over his power to Mr. Hadi, his deputy. Mr. Hadi had to deal with various Al-Qaeda attacks, separatist movements in the south, the continuing loyalty of many officers to the old president, and other administrative issues.

Another Houthi movement which fought a series of rebellions against Mr. Saleh during the previous decade took advantage and took control of the Saada province and neighbouring areas in January 2015.

Later, the Houthis gained support from ordinary disillusioned Yemenis and took control of Sanaa, the capital.

The President had to flee the scene. Alarmed by the rise of regional Shia power, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and 8 other mostly-Sunni Arab states began an air campaign aimed at restoring the Government led by Mr. Hadi.

The involvement of arms in this situation is pretty serious, since the armed forces across Yemen split, and

after the intervention of other Arab states, arms imports reached an all-time high in the Middle East. A SIPRI report stated that more weapons were delivered between 2012 and 2016 than any other 5 year period since 1990.<sup>6</sup> Saudi Arabia, which is currently leading the military intervention in Yemen, has increased its arms intake by 212%, mainly from the US and UK.

Despite staggering figures in the Middle East, which includes a 245% increase in the imports of arms by Qatar, Iran, which is under an arms embargo, received only 1.2% of total arms transfers to the region. In 2016, Iran took delivery of S-300 air defence missile systems from Russia in its first significant import of major weapons system since 2007.

Gulf Arab states have accused Iran of backing the Houthis financially and militarily, though Iran has denied this, and they are themselves backers of President Hadi. The UN estimated in January 2016 that 2,800 civilians had been killed since the escalation in March—60 percent of them in air strikes.

Civilians have been targeted by both sides, in violation of international humanitarian law, a UN panel of experts found. Among the violations the panel cited was Saudi Arabia's declaration of the entire city of Saada as a "military target"; the city has seen some of the war's worst devastation, including the destruction of a hospitals and schools. It was noted that Houthi forces committed war crimes as well including in their siege of the city of Taiz.

Moreover, following the end of Yemen's second civil war in 1994, the central government failed to collect weapon stockpiles left behind by the conflict, and these weapons were acquired by tribes and ethnic groups throughout the country. The government had little success in curtailing the arms trade, and the sales of small arms remained pervasive throughout the country.

Widespread poverty, conflicts in the northern and southern regions of the country, declining oil reserves, piracy in the Gulf of Aden, and the growing presence of Al-Qaeda in Yemen fueled this illicit activity. The poor economic situation and complex socio-political landscape in Yemen make activities such as arms smuggling appealing to Yemenis as a way to make a living.

## Egypt

The Sinai Insurgency is an ongoing conflict between Islamic militants and Egyptian security forces in Sinai Peninsula. It began after the start of the Egyptian Crisis, which saw the overthrow of long time president Hosni Mubarak in the Egyptian Revolution of 2011.

Militants exploited the chaotic situation in Egypt and weakened central authority to launch a series of attacks on government forces in Sinai. Egypt has launched two military operations in order to restore their authority in the region. The group Ansar Bait al-Maqdis, which has operated in Sinai from 2011 to 2013, pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) in November 2014, posing an even bigger threat to the

<sup>6</sup> Dehghan, Saeed Kamali. "Global arms trade reaches highest point since cold war era." The Guardian. February 19, 2017. Accessed May 2017.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/feb/20/global-arms-weapons-trade-highest-point-since-cold-war-era>.

already-fragile situation. The reason for insurgency is said to be the lack of attention from the central government in Cairo to the people's needs in the Sinai, causing growing dissent in the area.

The conflict is significant when it comes to weapon trade due to the high number of weapons originating from Libya that are in the hands of extremists and the Bedouin populations living in Sinai. This shows that different conflicts can affect each other, and how the escalation of one crisis can lead to the escalation of other crises. The fall of Qaddafi and the chaos that followed made it possible for smugglers to steal weaponry later sold to Egyptian insurgents, further arming militants of the Sinai insurgency.

Despite its deteriorating economic conditions, Egypt ranked the second among developing nations for importing arms in 2015 – buying almost \$12 billion worth of arms, according to a new US congressional report.

Moreover, Egypt has also made many crucial arms purchases from other countries, including Russia, France, and Germany since Abdel Fattah al-Sisi reached power by a military coup in 2013. The Egyptian-French agreement in 2015 is almost high-profile deal to purchase 5.2 billion euros' worth of military equipment, including 24 Rafale fighter jets and a naval frigate, and a contract with Russian firm Rosoboronexport to buy 46 attack helicopters.<sup>7</sup>

In 2016, Brazil's Forjas Taurus SA, the largest weapons manufacturer in Latin America, sold guns to a known Yemeni

arms trafficker who funneled them into his nation's civil war in violation of international sanctions, according to charges in court documents reviewed by Reuters. The handguns were allegedly shipped by Taurus to Djibouti and redirected to Yemen by Mana'a, according to court documents.

## Syria

The Syrian Civil war is a conflict between its long-serving government and those seeking to boot it out of office. The Assad family has held power in Syria since 1971. First it was Hafez al-Assad, then Bashar al-Assad. The people have been protesting against the failure of the long-proposed political and economic reforms.

By July 2011, the Free Syrian Army (FSA) had formed for the same purpose. Due to lack of co-ordination and command, the Syrian Freedom fighters were joined by people with their own Islamist agendas, and the FSA had no choice but to form a loose coalition with these new volatile groups.

Violence escalated, and the country descended into civil war as rebel brigades were formed to battle government forces for control of cities, towns and the countryside. Fighting reached the capital Damascus and second city of Aleppo in 2012.

The two sets formed in the country started trying to come to a conclusion using military power, but even after 5 years of armed conflict which began with anti-government protests before escalating into a full scale civil war, the death toll keeps on increasing with

<sup>7</sup> "A New US Report: Egypt was the Second Arms Importer in 2015." Middle East Observer. December 31, 2016. Accessed April 2017.

<https://www.middleeastobserver.org/2016/12/30/a-new-us-congressional-report-egypt-ranked-the-second-among-developing-nations-for-importing-arms-in-2015/>.

almost no regard for civilian casualties from either side.

Since Syria's civil war began its bloody escalation five years ago, Central and Eastern European countries have poured thousands of tons of arms and ammunition into four countries that are the main backers of armed opposition groups – Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Turkey. It is a trade that has been deeply profitable. It is also very likely illegal, according to human rights and arms experts. The transfers were deemed illegal under the ATT and other international law and should cease immediately.

The reporters found that export licenses from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Montenegro, Slovakia, Serbia, and Romania were often granted despite ample evidence that many weapons are ending up in Syria with armed opposition as well as Islamist groups accused of widespread abuses. The eight countries approved the export of at least €1.2 billion worth of weapons and ammunition to the four countries.

Even Croatian arms sales to Saudi Arabia have been fuelling the Syrian war. Croatia was among the first countries to supply weapons to Syrian rebels in the winter of 2012. The shipment was routed via Jordan with logistical support from the CIA and paid for by Saudi Arabia, according to a 2013 investigation by the New York Times. The UN database revealed that Croatia exported \$36 million worth of ammunition to Jordan in the two years since the Syrian conflict began in 2012. After Croatia's role became public, Saudi Arabia took over importing more than \$124 million worth of ammunition

since 2014 – two thirds in the first nine months of 2016 alone.

The involvement of Russia was also seen in this case where the Kremlin said it spent almost \$500m on its military operation in Syria that started on September 30 and goes on despite a widely-advertised partial withdrawal in March 2016.

The Syrian war has helped Moscow boost its status as a major arms producer and exporter, already the world's second-largest after the United States.

## 2.3 Resolutions/Treaties

- <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/41>
- <http://undocs.org/en/A/C.1/71/CRP.2>
- [http://www.un.org/en/ga/first/71/PDF/CRP\\_3\\_Rev\\_3.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/ga/first/71/PDF/CRP_3_Rev_3.pdf)
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- <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/21>
- <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/44>
- <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/62>

## 2.4 Questions a Resolution Must Answer

1. What steps can be taken to induce better reporting to the UNROCA?
2. How can regularity in reporting and inventory marking be maintained after transfers?

3. What kinds of export control regulations are necessary for a more transparent weapon trade?
4. How can be done to take care of the potentially destabilizing build-ups of weapons in specific areas?
5. How can we combat the lack of access to natural resources caused by arms transfers?
6. In what ways can the UN try and control the interference of energy-hungry countries using arms proliferation in the Middle East as a tool for economic growth?
7. How can the UN keep a check on the 'diversion' of arms and subsequently control it?
8. How can the UN control gender-based violence due to illicit conventional arms transfers?
9. How can the destabilized and affected areas be cleansed of the stockpiles left behind after historic conflicts and non-state activities?
10. How can transparency be increased?
11. Which kinds of new methods can be introduced to facilitate better differentiation of licit and illicit arms transfers and keep a check on them?
12. How can the countries of the Middle East further increase personal weapon import and export safety?
13. What sort of checkpoints and regulations can be introduced to filter conventional armaments which break international law?

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- [https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/arms\\_trade\\_treaty](https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/arms_trade_treaty)
- <https://www.un.org/disarmament/convarms/att/>
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## 2.6 Links for Further Reaearch

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