

Forum: General Assembly 1

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TOPIC 3: The question of the enforcement of arms embargoes**Topic Libguide****I. Introduction to the Topic**

An arms embargo aiming to prevent one of the superpowers from their military power, while not effective in limiting China's development, illustrates the world condemning human rights violations. Amid the complexities of the world's conflicts and strains, the purpose of enforcement of arms embargoes is diverse but remains a vital tool for domestic and multilateral politics and diplomacy. Arms embargoes are regulations or a set of sanctions that in the context of the United Nations are a peace mechanism that intends to coerce stakeholders in conflict to change their behavior in the interest of international security. The establishment of arms embargoes can also indicate a country's neutrality in a military conflict or be strategic to limit an actor's military capabilities and ability to inflict violence on others. Used internationally, arms embargoes are a common way to limit warfare spread or are used as a diplomatic signal for displacement with another country's foreign affairs.

International:

The UN Security Council has worked as a significant body to imply international arms embargoes upon certain nations, most recently Haiti in 2022 and South Sudan in resolution in 2018. The UN has both mandatory and non-mandatory arms embargoes, non-mandatory embargoes have been used to a larger extent during the 1900s and early 2000s in larger conflicts often brought up by clashes of ideology. These arms embargoes are applied to malicious groups such as the Taliban and Al-Qaeda or to countries with high instability rates. This would be the Central African Republic and Haiti where an arms embargo intended to prevent civil war and civilian death tolls. The justification for these embargoes is to suppress humanitarian crises and signal the world condemning a country's human rights abuses.

Regional:

Arms embargoes are commonly applied from groups that share the same interests in ongoing conflicts hence, many arms embargoes are from organizations such as the European Union, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and the African Union. Most notably the European Union has many embargoes outside of the United Nations, for example, the long-term arms embargo on China ever since the Tiananmen Square Massacre and the Russia embargo which has proven its importance amid the Russia-Ukraine conflict. However, the efficiency of regionally decided arms embargoes within the EU remains to be questioned as the trade persists in their embargoed regions with actors outside the organization. Furthermore, it can be misleading to consider the EU or any regional block as a single unified actor in the issue at stake as all member states act independently and unilaterally to consider implicating arms embargoes.

Domestic:

Arms embargoes can occur between countries, often when the interests of a nation interfere with its block or a nation wishes to condemn a country for breaking humanitarian law. One significant example of this in the case of condemning a nation's military action is Sweden which in 1966 applied embargo against the U.S. due to the terror and humanitarian crisis caused in the Vietnam war. This resulted in the notable deprivation of certain submachine guns within the U.S. Navy and was one reason why all Swedish and United diplomatic ties were suspended in the Vietnam War. Domestically the issue of breaking arms embargoes in the interest of the government or political actors is also brought forward, for example, the U.S. Iran Contra Affair during Ronald Reagan's Presidency.

II. Definition of Key Terms & Concepts**Conventional Arms Trade**

Conventional arms trade is the trade of all arms and military-related material excluding weapons of mass destruction. Arms embargoes aim to entirely halt and prevent the supply of conventional arms trade or certain embargoed items.

Embargoed items

Embargoed items are specific military equipment, vehicles, paramilitary equipment, and assistance or training of military personnel that can be embargoed depending on their significance in a country. Arms embargoes using specific embargoed items intend to weaken specific aspects of a government and national defence.

Fragile States

Fragile States are often measured under the Fragile State Index and are countries with authorities that cannot efficiently ensure security and social needs for their population. These states are commonly the subject of arms embargoes and are important stakeholders in international security.

III. Key Stakeholders**Fragile States**

Fragile states with increasing insecurity are the most common subject to international arms embargoes and sanctions. As the situation of human rights violations and brutality exerted by government or external forces opposes threats to the civil population in these states, arms embargoes are viewed as the most efficient way to prevent the escalation of an armed conflict or an ongoing conflict. However, in the perspective of the respective governments of these countries, emphasizing military regimes, these embargoes and commonly additional economic sanctions cause the expansion of illicit trade and trafficking as the exporters working with the country become limited. In fragile states, arms embargoes and sanctions weaken the state and allow militias and guerrillas to exert dominance as the opposition is weakened. This in turn has created anti-western sentiment from regimes like the Taliban, Tatmadaw, and the DPRK as international embargoes and sanctions have generated humanitarian suffrage and

economical issues for the state. These countries remain the biggest opposers to international arms embargoes and a cause of tensions multilaterally within the issue at hand.

Militias, Transnational Networks and Organized Crime Groups

Militias, transnational networks, and organized crime groups are significant subjects of arms embargoes, such as the U.N.-mandated embargo against the Taliban and Al Quida. Yet these groups persist in proposing the greatest challenges to arms embargo efficiency, having both economic capabilities and strong networks the organizations drive illicit arms trade by supplying weapons to embargoed regions. Through exerting political violence and organised crime these groups further unstabilize fragile states creating escalating civil wars and domestic conflict being an active root cause for the enactment of national arms embargoes.

The United States of America

The United States has over the past decades solidified its dominance as the largest weapon exporter globally. Hence, the unilateral arms embargoes implied by the U.S. are the most effective as the country accounts for 39% of all global military exports in nearly all categories of conventional and dual-use arm technologies. Other large arms exporters are commonly specialized in specific categories of weaponry and vehicles, like fighter jets or tanks, which if those exports are stripped away would only lead to a weakened military in those areas. While the U.S. unilateral embargoes could limit military capacity at a larger scale considering the technologies they hold. The United States persists to be the powerhouse of arms trade and questions of International Security play a large role on the multilateral scene.

Significant Arms Exporters

International and regional forums arms embargoes can conflict with countries' interests such as Switzerland, Austria, Sweden, Israel, and South Korea as weaponry trade is a large aspect of the country's exports and economy. For significant arms exporters, the trade of weaponry and governmental ideals are often disparate as the economic benefits of the exports are prioritized. While neutrality laws of some nations like Switzerland prohibit the trade of arms to countries in active conflict, the trade persists with nations in the Middle East and Southeast Asia where conventional arms pose a threat to civil populations as police and military brutality persevere. In previous conflicts when the U.N. has not established mandated arms embargoes these significant arms exporters utilized it, for example in the Biafrawars while remaining to not note it in official channels Israel supported both sides with military activities. This holds great significance as neutral and democratic country's stances may shift drastically in the context of arms trade and embargoes.

United Nations Security Council

The UN Security Council is the body that establishes the internationally binding UN mandated embargoes. As the VETO nations can prohibit the pass of embargoes, the legitimacy of the council and value of arms embargoes have been questioned. Most significantly in recent times the Ukraine-Russia conflict and the Palestine-Israel conflicts have seen extremely limited progress as the U.S. remains as Israel's strong ally and Russia is an active stakeholder in the conflict. Hence, due to the nature of the UNs structure progress on multilateral conflicts is hindered and arms embargoes cannot be efficiently applied. The UN created the Sanction Committee in 2011 which

mission includes the regulations of arms embargoes however, as only the Security Council holds the power to implement them the Sanction Committee and General Assembly rather remain as spaces for discussion and debate.

IV. Key Issues including Background Information

The Dynamics of Fragile States

The key characteristic of a fragile state is a severe lack of authority that cannot provide maintenance of security and basic social needs for its population. This leads to increased crime rates and increased presence of malicious weaponized groups further escalating the security situation and possibly leading to threats against international security beyond the nation itself. In these countries where arms embargoes are most commonly applied, they often backlash as crime groups increase dominance while the state's power decreases, this has been the case in countries such as the Central African Republic and South Sudan where internal and external actors have continued the domestic conflicts. Yet, as the authority in these countries remains weak as of before embargoes are applied member nations would not entrust the authority to solve the conflict utilizing conventional arms. The question of fragile states leads to the biggest question of embargoes and sanctions, how to most effectively limit humanitarian suffrage as even if local authorities should not to be entrusted would it not be a worse matter if armed groups terrorized the local population?

Effectiveness of international and regional arms embargoes

As states continuously commit blatant and extensive violations of the UN mandated arms embargoes, the legitimacy and effectiveness of them decrease. Libya (RESO) and the Central African (RESO) republics have struggled to implement the arms embargoes as countries such as but not limited to Russia and Turkey have continuously traded embargoed items including missiles and military vehicles. These violations and their lack of recognition invalidates the sole purpose of arms embargoes internationally. On a regional level the effectiveness of arms embargo enforcement is not efficient as other parties that do not fall under the embargo can continue trade. This concept being made visible in the EU embargoes where China and Russia continue conventional arms trade to the embargoed regions eliminating the embargoes' purpose as the countries' defences are not weakened nor is the security situation changed.

Economical benefits for arms exporters

The economic benefits of conventional arms trade and illicit trade are immense, globally the lucrative market adds up to a market value of from \$118B to \$212B estimated in 2019. As the market continues to grow and new achievements within weaponry development that increase the presence of dual-use technologies occur the market grows more profitable. In the context of enforcement of arms embargoes, engagement in the profitable arms market becomes more crucial to nations' economies making violations of embargoes a commonality. This is especially the case for already embargoed states, Russia's weaponry trade with UN-mandated embargoed regions in Africa and the Middle East is growing after Europe's embargoes have grown to be more vigorous against Russia with an increased number of embargoed items since 2020.

V. Timeline of Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

Date	Description of event
1963	The United Nations established its first arms embargo which was fully enforced against South Africa in 1971.
1974	Unilateral arms embargoes were placed on the Vietnamese Communist Party government by the United States, simultaneously other nations placed embargoes
1977	Following the murder of the South African anti-apartheid Steve Biko the United Nations imposed a mandatory arms embargo however, the United States republican government still carried through trade in the 1980s.
1981	Beginning in 1981 and ending in 1989 U.S. senior officials facilitated the illegal trade of arms in Iran going against mandated arms embargoes in secrecy. This generated one of the largest scandals regarding arms embargoes known as the Iran-Contra Affair
1989	United Nations and European Parliament arms embargo enforced on the People's Republic of China following the Tiananmen Square Massacre.
2020	Since the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine conflict vigorous arms embargoes have been placed on Russia with an increased number of embargoed items.

VI. Possible Challenges & Solutions

Effectiveness of regional and international arms embargoes

As the UN-mandated arms embargoes can only be applied if accepted by VETO nations and regional arms embargoes from the EU do not abide by the majority of countries, the effectiveness of using arms embargoes for promoting peace becomes limited. This poses a great challenge as only the unilateral arms embargoes by the U.S. and the UN mandate embargoes become seen as effective. In the past decades of arms embargoes, there have been many violations of UN-mandated embargoes often by Russia in the African embargoed territories. Possible solutions are limited as the insecurities of arms embargoes are a result of the world order which influence is difficult to prevent.

Improvement of security and resources in fragile states facing arms embargoes

The direct correlation between lack of security and fragile states makes them some of the most common nations facing arms embargoes. The indirect solution is to ensure the humanitarian aid programs and UN organs work effectively in the countries when facing arms embargoes and escalating conflicts.

Economical benefits for arms exporters

While the economic benefits of arms exporters provide economic benefits, as seen with the Russian arms embargoes for the EU the countries tend to shift the main trade partners in time of arms embargoes which could be encouraged in the committee.

VII. Recommendations for Resolution Writing including Research

The chairs encourage delegates to explore their country's position and the large diversity of implications for arms enforcement interpreted differently between member states. The most significant aspects start of research with the issue at stake is your country's position as an exporter or importer of conventional arms, the country's history with unilateral, regional and international arms embargoes and the country's membership in international organisations.

Please consult the historical background of; Argentina, when US president Jimmy Carter imposed an arms embargo on the military government in response to human rights abuses; Indonesia, when the US government imposed an arms embargo against Indonesia in 1999 due to human rights violation in East Timor. The embargo was lifted in 2005; Iran, a country in which an economic sanction was imposed, following the Iranian Revolution in 1979; aside from these countries, there are People's Republic of China, South Africa, and the United States.

List of countries with arms embargo by the UN that must be included in delegates' research are: Central African Republic, Haiti, Iraq, North Korean, South Sudan, Yemen. There are countries with arms embargo imposed by another nation; Argentina by the UK, Cuba by US, China by EU, Syria by the Arab League, Zimbabwe by EU.

Recognize other nations' unique approaches to the issue and anticipate the range of stances within the committee depending on the country's relation to arms embargoes. Seek out your delegation's military and economic interests yet simultaneously note the importance of multilateral cooperation for the committee's mission to strive for international security.

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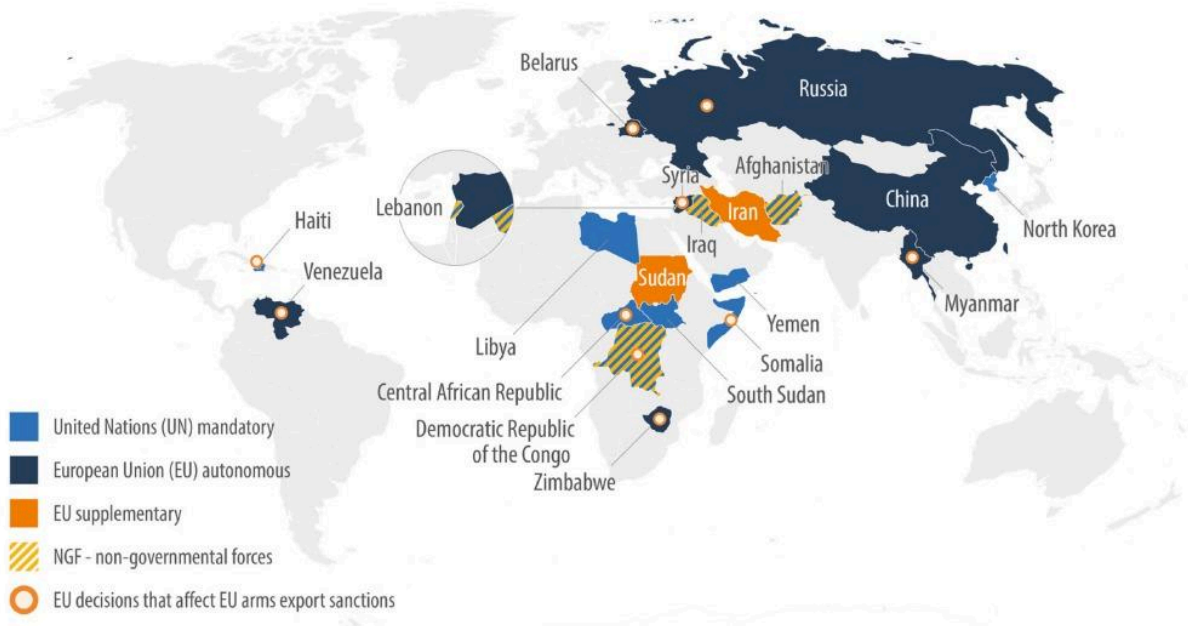
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IX: Additional Resources

If there are any relevant maps, images or data that will help your delegates better understand the issue, include those in this section.



Data source: [EU sanctions map](#), accessed in June 2023

Country	UN Arms Embargo	EU Arms Embargo
CAR	✓	✓
DRC	✓	✓
Egypt		✓
Libya	✓	✓
Somalia	✓	✓
South Sudan	✓	✓
Sudan	✓	✓
Zimbabwe		✓