

# TOPIC 2: The question of disarmament of atomic/nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons

## I. Introduction to the Topic

During the war-struck period, weapons were prominently used as a means of combat and defense with significantly severe humanitarian repercussions. The first large-scale production and employment of these weapons were recorded in the First World War when the casualty rate was estimated to be 40 million, 20% of which were soldiers who died of chemical toxic gas. In the present world where the societal structure is heavily based on hierarchy, no nations still hold a tight attachment and interest in the acquisition of these weapons. Whereas the lower developed countries are dependent on possessing firearms as a defense mechanism against attempts of invasion, others use them as the affirmation of their power and as an exertion of diplomatic pressure. This would further aggravate the military tension among nations, consequently leading to civil wars and conflicts. Cooperation among member states is urged to construct an inclusive approach to ban or strictly manage weapons of mass destruction and to expand the zone free of the mentioned arms for the sake of peace, stability, and security.

## II. Definition of Key Terms & Concepts

### Atomic/Nuclear weapon

Device designed to release energy in an explosive manner as a result of nuclear fission and/or nuclear fusion.

### Biological weapon

Microorganisms or the substances they produce, such as viruses, bacteria, or fungi, that can spread diseases, harm and kill people, animals and land. Biological weapons are capable of causing a wide scale of casualty, but the range of infrastructural destruction is minimal.

### Chemical weapons

Toxic chemicals that are weaponized, which can be in the form of chemicals, munitions, and equipment that directly employ these firearms.

### Disarmament

The reduction, limitation, or abolition of weapons.

### **International/ Global security**

Military and diplomatic measures taken by states and international organisation to ensure mutual safety and survival.

### **National security**

The ability of the sovereign state to protect and defend its citizens

### **Nuclear-weapon-free zone**

A regional approach to strengthen global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament norms and consolidate international efforts towards peace and security

### **Weapon of mass destruction (WMD)**

Weapon with the capacity to inflict death and destruction on such a massive scale

## **III. Key Stakeholders**

### **Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)**

The OPCW was formed to act as an implementing body of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which was enforced in April 1997. Its ultimate aim is to achieve a world free of chemical weapons, and to ensure chemicals are employed for peace, progress and prosperity. 193 Member States are tasked to cooperate effectively, propose and construct corresponding programs and policies for the Chemical Weapons Convention. 99% of global declared chemical weapons have been destroyed under the supervision of the OPCW.

### **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**

The IAEA was founded in 1957 to act as an autonomous international organisation within the United Nations. Its objective is to prohibit the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to promote secure and peaceful use of nuclear energy. 164 Member States are assisted to develop a strong diplomatic relationship through technical cooperation programmes, guided and supervised to achieve IAEA goals. The IAEA has played a vital role in implementing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons through means of imposing safeguard covenants on nuclear arms and of developing further applications of the nuclear energy for appropriate uses.

### **The Nonproliferation Policy Education Center (NPEC)**

The NPEC was founded in 1994 as a non-profit and educational organisation. Its aim is to increase awareness and dissemination of knowledge regarding the proliferation of WMD. NPEC educates world experts, policymakers to be able to issue framework and policies that prevent the proliferation of WMD for the sake of global defence, peace and security.

#### **IV. Key Issues including Background Information**

##### **Illicit transfers of WMD**

Trafficking of WMD equipment cross-nation has been a major threat to regional and international order and security. The transporting route and methods have yet to be pinpointed and these supply groups have been reported to seek external support to facilitate their illegal activities. Such a breach has exposed significant weak spots of the international safeguarding programs, and the dissemination of WMD would pave the way for further acts of terrorism.

##### **Global terrorism**

The possession of biological, chemical and even atomic weapons has always been available for numerous non-state actors, some of which are armed groups and terrorist organisation. In fact, records of lost or stolen WMD materials have been reported by the IAEA, a case prevalent among continents. The acquisition of these weapons would be pernicious, especially little being under the scope and track of international authorities. As a result, there have been reckless usages and bombings on not only military bases, but also on critical infrastructure and citizens.

##### **Secret weapon development programs**

Since the formation of disarmament treaties and organisations, several nations have and still conducted secretive military programs where weapons of mass destruction are tested. Information regarding this act is kept confidential and not open for public speculation, including the capacities, numbers, expenditure and purposes. The lack of transparency and unwillingness to reveal details of the militarisation programs would not only concern global citizens but would also provoke scepticism among world leaders, which irrefutably defies the ultimate goal of international cooperation.

##### **Lack of facilities and investment to combat toxic remnants**

WMDs are to leave long-lasting impacts on the affected regions with, for instance, toxic gases, leakage, etc, resulting in the burgeon and deterioration of health issues and terminal illnesses, in addition to endless

environmental consequences. However, a majority of programs tasked to remove these remnants are unsafe, exposing workers to severe health risks and governments worldwide are still scrutinising problems that will arise if destruction programs are to be implemented. Moreover, healthcare systems are not accessible to all regions, particularly in the marginalised areas, putting the affected populations further at risks.

## V. Timeline of Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

Date	Description of event
February 1922	The Five-Power Treaty was signed by the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy, France, and Japan, aiming to prevent an arms race after World War I with a naval displacement program.
1940-1942	Japan engaged in biological warfare and conducted human experimentation on China, killing thousands of Chinese troops and citizens. Unit 731, a covert Japanese biological and chemical warfare research unit, used infected fleas and flies to spread the plague, typhoid, and other diseases in regions of China.
August 1945	The United States dropped two nuclear bombs on the city of Hiroshima and Nagasaki - the only two existing events of atomic weapons being used, killing approximately 70,000 and 33,000 citizens respectively.
July 1968	The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was signed with the objective to inhibit the spread of nuclear arms and weapons technology.
April 1972	The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) was signed to prohibit the development, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of biological weapons. It was the first multilateral treaty to ban an entire category of WMD.
January 1993	The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), administered by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), was signed with an aim to prohibit the development, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons.
1980 - 1990	Chemical attacks were reported in the Iran-Iraq war. Iraq employed chemical attacks on Iran, resulting in tens of thousands casualties among Iranian troops and citizens.

2004	The Security Council adopted Resolution 1540, claiming all States to follow and enforce appropriate regulations and measures against the proliferation of WMD.
September 2017	The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was signed. It was the first multilateral agreement to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons and to address the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons deployment.

## VI. Possible Challenges & Solutions

### Safeguarding and security systems

The storage of WMD should be strictly regulated and supervised. However, safeguarding systems seemed to not be secure enough and exposed to the risks of having these materials being stolen. Therefore, delegates may want to tackle this issue through means of governmental or external investment and cooperation.

### Transparency on proliferation weapon

Diplomatic trust is crucial in securing international peace. Therefore, any activities that present to be questionable with unclear motives would induce nations to put the guard up, thus fracturing foreign relationships and future possibilities of cooperation. So delegates can look further into how law enforcement and agreements with member states can address such an issue while still considering the importance of compromising and reaching mutual consensus.

### Individual security

As significant as national security, individual safety and human rights should also be taken into consideration as they would be the most vulnerable and directly susceptible to harm in war-struck or terrorism events. Therefore, precaution measures ought always be available if a national or international conflict arises, and humanitarian aid must also be accessible and constantly enhanced to provide sufficient protection and safe treatment. This is alarmingly urged in low-income and marginalised regions, where networks to such a service is poor and national budget cannot afford the highly restrictive cost of medical technologies and support.

## VII. Recommendations for Resolution Writing including Research

The chair would like to strongly recommend the delegates to deeply research into their countries' position on the issue before they start writing the resolution so that they fully understand what stances their country holds and write operative clauses accordingly. It would also be easier for delegates to work with other delegates with similar perspectives on the issue so that the resolution as a whole offers strong and coherent solutions. If you are unsure about the (whole) concept of a resolution or are stuck on how to start writing a resolution/operative clause, the chairs would like to highly recommend the delegate to check out and infer by having a read of the resolution manual which is on the [UNISMUN website](#). Even if you have had a read of the resolution manual and are still lost, please do not hesitate to reach out to any of the chairs!

### VIII. Bibliography

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- [A Brief History Of Chemical Weapons | Mach | NBC News](#)
- [Chemical Weapons in Syria - Briefing by UN Nuclear Disarmament Chief](#)
- [NATO urges Russia not to use atomic, biological and chemical weapons](#)