



# **Stanford Model United Nations Conference 2014**

## **Special Political and Decolonization Committee**



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## Letter from your Chair

Dear Delegates,

I am so excited for SMUNC 2014 and I hope that you are equally as excited to be attending it in just a few weeks. My name is Amartya Das and I will be your chair for the Special, Political, and Decolonization (SPECPOL) Committee. I am originally from Chicago, IL and live just south of downtown. I am a sophomore at Stanford and planning to major in either Computer Science or Mathematical and Computational Science.

This will be my second SMUNC as chair and my 16<sup>th</sup> conference as either a delegate or dais member. Since being introduced to MUN during my freshman year of High School at the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools, I've absolutely fallen in love with it. As a delegate I loved the rush of meeting a whole room full of people who were equally as passionate and ready to debate such important international issues. Outside of MUN, I am also involved on campus as a member of the Undergraduate Senate, a Tour Guide, and a research assistant in the genetics department.

Our topics represent two of the most pressing issues in preventing international armed conflict. While they encompass some of the most complex national policies, I am confident that you are up to the challenge of drafting a successful resolution to these topics. Remember that the skills that you will learn from participating in MUN and in SMUNC will serve you well beyond this weekend and so I encourage you to step outside your comfort zones in speaking and in writing as you approach our committee.

I am incredibly honored to be serving as your chair this year. I look forward to meeting each and every one of you and for a wonderful and thought-provoking weekend of debate.

Sincerely,

Amartya Das  
Chair, Special, Political, and Decolonization Committee  
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## **Topic A: Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation**

The immediate humanitarian threat posed by small arms and light weapons (SALW) has long been overshadowed by an international focus on nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. Nevertheless, statistics have shown that SALW have been more central in the majority of intrastate conflicts since the end of the cold war<sup>1</sup>. As a result, despite increasing international political scrutiny on nuclear weapons, it is equally important to discuss the regulation and non-proliferation of SALW. SALW-warfare has largely taken over many developing countries and nations under political turmoil; these include many African nations and nations across the Middle East and Asia. While the UN has previously focused discussions on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, this committee aims to bring the focus to a more common (and widely distributed) weapon. The key difference between the non-proliferation of SALW and other types of weapons is in their ease of access and wide distribution. Furthermore, SALW have increasing humanitarian effects, having displaced millions of people in the Middle East in recent years, for example.

### **What are Small Arms and Light Weapons?**

SALW includes small arms intended for military and civilian use and light weapons generally intended for military use. These often include handguns, grenades, machine guns, landmines, and rocket launchers. The two main classes of weapons (Small

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<sup>1</sup> Dan Caldwell and Robert E. Williams. Seeking Security in an Insecure World, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006, 27.

Arms, Light Weapons) are divided into hand-held firearms (handguns, rifles, etc.) and medium-caliber and explosive-level weapons (grenades, mortars, etc.), respectively.

The United Nations General Assembly, in December 2005, defined small arms and light weapons as “any man-portable lethal weapon that expels or launches, is designed to expel or launch, or may be readily converted to expel or launch a shot, bullet or projectile by the action of an explosive, excluding antique small arms and light weapons or their replicas.” This definition has been the basis for international arms control policies in recent years. It is important to note, however, that SALW provisions are generally not oriented towards imposing domestic or local legislation.

### **The root of the problem**

While most nations will agree that a better effort is needed to work towards SALW non-proliferation, the overall question here is to consider how this non-proliferation can be achieved. Factors that have complicated this goal include various other interests of national governments, the issue of national sovereignty, and existing domestic weapons laws. Furthermore, this topic has been brought to the forefront of the international community in recent years as a humanitarian issue regarding the wellbeing of millions of displaced citizens across the Middle East. Ultimately, in the last few decades, SALW have come to the forefront of domestic and international conflict, particularly across developing nations. They threaten both the citizens and governments of these nations and provide a means for increased international conflict.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Beginnings of Discussion in the UN**

The proliferation of SALW has been an issue that was introduced only fairly recently into United Nations forums. It was first raised in a 1996 General Assembly resolution that recognized SALW as a key barrier to complete disarmament. Further reports by the United Nations have recognized SALW as “the primary or sole tools of violence in several of the armed conflicts death with by the United Nations, in particular where fighting involved irregular troops among the conflict parties” and “not only a major source of insecurity but also [an impediment to] socio-economic development.”

### **Relevant UN Actions**

The first official UN conference focused on SALW was the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Traffic in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (held July 2001). The conference concluded with the production of a non-binding Program of Action assigning the responsibility of small arms misuse and proliferation to each individual national government. The Program specified that such measures should be achieved by strengthening national regulations governing production and dispersion of small arms, ensuring all weapons were recorded and marked, and encouraging the destruction of weapons. Despite progress made in the conference, many nations did not agree with the Program of Action, refusing to sign anything with references to human rights violations. Ultimately, the final program did not address committing towards international marking and tracing of weapons or increasing transparency in the legal

production of SALW. Since then, many follow up conferences have been held and strides continue to be made by the United Nations Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the UN Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA). Recent resolutions adopted by the UN on this topic have focused on the multiple aspects of small arms proliferation and control, from humanitarian implications to the creation of national frameworks for implementation. Nevertheless, no direct action has been taken by the United Nations and SALW use remains rampant across international and national conflicts.

## **CURRENT SITUATION**

There are a number of key areas that must be focused on in addressing the issue of SALW internationally. Targeting non-proliferation in these areas is especially important in light of recent events in the Middle East and Africa. Terrorist and counter-governmental organizations such as ISIS in the Middle East and Boko Haram in Nigeria rely heavily on small arms. Among the major areas to focus on are: small arms production, small arms distribution, small arms stockpiles, and perpetrators.

### **Small Arms Production**

Small arms are produced in a number of facilities, from small workshops to highly technologically advanced factories. Furthermore, these facilities range from private enterprises, to state-owned facilities, and smaller, specializing shops. The United States and the Russian Federation are among the major producers in the world, manufacturing and distributing millions of firearms each year. New technology since the

turn of the century has also helped global production rates and allowed established armies to increase their arsenal with more advanced weapons. Illegal production also plays a role in SALW production, but on a smaller scale. Nevertheless, these illegal firearms still play a large role on the local level and under regional authorities.

### **Small Arms Distribution**

Whereas production of SALW largely occurs legally, the distribution and transfer of SALW occur through both authorized and illicit means across the globe. Recording transfers and payment of firearms remains among the top problems of SALW non-proliferation. Transparency in this regard is essential in preventing unauthorized transfers. Nevertheless, the issue of national sovereignty has prevented effective transparency with many significant exporters such as North Korea, Iran, and Israel reporting little to no information on firearm exports and distribution. The Small Arms Trade Transparency Barometer is a tool used to analyze how accurate export reports of various nations are in truly communicating their distribution. The most important note about small arms distribution is the ease of transportation from the legal to the illegal realm, ending up in the hands of non-state actors. This sort of diversion can occur in any number of means including hijacking of government goods, seizure of factories, or bribery.

## **Small Arms Stockpiles**

As mentioned previously, small arms stockpiles can be especially dangerous when they are poorly protected and available for seizure by non-state actors. For this reason, a better solution to current stockpiling methods must be worked towards.

Research conducted by the Small Arms Survey has shown that there are at least 875 million firearms worldwide, the majority of which are in the hands of civilians and not national governments. Furthermore, most of these firearms have not been reported due to poor transparency measures. State stockpiles are the most dangerous because they are produced legally but can be illegally distributed via large or small thefts. Furthermore, loss of stockpiles can lead to massive governmental destabilization. It is particularly important for documentation to play a key role in small arms stockpiling as stolen firearms are most commonly used in crime. While current laws tend to focus on the theft of firearms they fail to address internal corruption or other methods of distribution.

## **Perpetrators**

In order to best prevent the proliferation of SALW it is important to focus on those people who are most likely to utilize such weapons. Most often perpetrators are non-state actors and child soldiers. In many domestic conflicts in developing nations, child soldiers are forced to work by non-state actors. Furthermore, SALW-use by such non-state actors and child soldiers are extremely prevalent as they are easily useable by children. A longer-term solution is to provide humanitarian care to child soldiers and children at risk in developing nations.



## **PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

One large gap in the international community's response to this issue is the lack of international standards. Small Arms Control standards are crucial to creating a unifying and comprehensive approach to this issue. UN CASA has begun drafting the International Small Arms Control Standards but progress and proper implementation must occur before any progress is made from these standards. One idea for these standards may be to focus on national control measures regarding illegal manufacturing or transferring of small arms. Despite the promise of international standards, they must also be backed up by proper oversight to ensure the standards are being upheld.

Other potential solutions include disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) initiatives. Such initiatives have previously been used in post-conflict zones to aid stability. While DDR cannot be the only solution to SALW, it does appear to be a crucial part of any potential solution. Disarmament initiatives will aid to prevent SALW proliferation and further production. However, disarmament may result in national instability and therefore demobilization and reintegration must be applied as well.

While these are examples of broad-based solutions that can be applied to the issue of SALW, a resolution must explore these and other topics in depth to create a comprehensive plan combatting the proliferation of SALW.

## **BLOC POSITIONS**

***European Union:*** The EU recognizes the risk that SALW pose to local communities and has advocated for measures to reduce this risk. The EU supports a legally binding international Arms Trade Treaty. The EU has also been noted for making efforts towards destructing surplus small arms.

***Middle East:*** Gun ownership in the Middle East is among the highest in the world. This statistic contributes to regional instability and safety issues. In the Middle East, stockpile security is among the most important management issue. Disarmament initiatives have taken place in Iraq and Afghanistan but further efforts have been unsuccessful.

***Africa:*** Africa is central to a number of domestic conflicts and small arms and light weapons play a large role in these conflicts. Reducing the number of weapons is crucial to increasing the stability of many African nations. The African Union has enacted multiple platforms for SALW control, none of which are legally binding. Many African nations are in an era of political turmoil and socioeconomic depression. SALW have continued to plague these countries and focusing on non-proliferation can have economic and humanitarian effects as well.

***Major Arms Trade Nations:*** Nations such as the USA and Russia have to focus on both their economies and world community when considering SALW non-proliferation. They have attempted to focus on better transparency and information sharing policies, as well

improve marking and tracing efforts. Furthermore a focus on preventing illegal diversion of SALW is crucial and anti-corruption efforts have begun to be undertaken.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1) Should the current U.N. definition of SALW be edited?
- 2) What measures can be implemented to address the root causes of armed violence?
- 3) How can international treaties be enforced?
- 4) How can illicit trading be curbed?
- 5) How can current marking and tracing procedures be improved?
- 6) What incentives can be provided to increase national transparency?

## **RESEARCH AIDS**

(note: These are simply a starting point for your background research. Please make sure to thoroughly research your nation's policies in regards to this topic and what particular actions they support or have undertaken.)

<http://www.smallarmssurvey.org>

<http://www.un.org/disarmament>

<http://www.un-casa.org>

## Topic B: The Role of Private Military Contractors and UN

### Peacekeepers

Throughout its history the UN has been known as an organization dedicated to resolving international conflict and aiding those affected by such conflict. One manner in which the UN currently aims to achieve this goal is through UN peacekeeping troops. Peacekeepers are responsible for monitoring and observing peace processes in post-conflict areas and for helping to implement peace agreements following conflict resolution. Nevertheless, recent trends have shown that peacekeepers are often being deployed to regions in the midst of armed conflict. While the justification for doing so, aiding civilians and providing humanitarian support during conflict periods, is valid there is no standard protocol or rules truly governing peacekeeping troops in such circumstances. With this lack of protocol or oversight, peacekeeping troops have increasingly been accused of crimes such as sexual abuse, murder, and theft while on duty. To further complicate this issue, the UN has also begun to turn to Private Military Corporations (PMCs) for peacekeeping efforts when peacekeeping troops alone are not sufficient. This brings the issue of the commercialization of war to the forefront of our discussion. Furthermore, the UN's definition of PMCs in Article 47 of the *Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions* lacks specificity and thus there is little regulation in place regarding the use of private military corporations in armed conflict. As a result, PMCs are not subject to the level of public or legislative approval that regular military personnel would be.

## **BACKGROUND**

UN peacekeeping was first developed during the Cold War as a way to resolve conflicts between nations using unarmed or lightly armed military personnel under UN command. They were most often deployed to areas where two sides were in need of a neutral party to observe and implement the peace process. As of February 2009, there have been 63 official UN peacekeeping operations. Peacekeeping troops have been used throughout the half-century in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the India-Pakistan partition, the Korean War, the Suez Crisis and a number of other international issues. The 1988 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces for “a decisive contribution” to the resolution of worldwide conflict.

Since the end of the Cold War, the Security Council has established more complex UN peacekeeping missions, most often helping to implement peace agreements following civil wars or other domestic conflicts. They have also been more involved in election processes. UN peacekeeping troops began seeing armed conflict in the mid-1990s with involvement in the 1994 Rwandan genocide and the 1995 massacre in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These missions had little manpower and were not supported by the nations and are most often cited as peacekeeping failures.

More recently, PMCs have also become involved in peacekeeping efforts. Whether employed by the UN or privately employed, these corporations have become increasingly subject to scrutiny due to repeated accusations of human rights violations. The use of PMCs, particularly as peacekeeping forces, has been poorly articulated by the UN and by individual nations.

## **CURRENT SITUATION**

While PMCs have been increasingly employed by individual nations for years (especially as mercenaries), it is only recently that the UN has also begun to employ them for peacekeeping purposes. The “Brahimi Report of the Expert Panel on UN Peace Support Operations” details their involvement in such matters. These contractors have provided technical and logistic support in UN operations. This raises concerns, however, due to potential national affiliations of PMCs and potential bias. Ultimately, despite significant steps taken by the UN, there is still a lack of a universal definition of the roles of peacekeepers in armed conflict, particularly if such peacekeepers are privately hired corporations. With a lack of regulation and oversight, both kinds of peacekeepers are not held to the same standard that a national military would be, resulting in the potential for several human rights violations and a lack of progress in conflict regions.

## **PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

While banning PMCs from armed conflict may seem like an attractive solution, it is simply infeasible due to the lack of resources that the UN can provide with its own peacekeepers. Any solution should attempt to better define what a contractor and what a peacekeeper is. Furthermore a solution should help delineate the exact roles of these peacekeepers in armed conflict. While the following solutions are suggestions, please keep in mind the views of your country as you research your policies – some, if not all, may not be in line with your policy.

One attempt would be to properly and explicitly define the role of a PMC in armed conflict within international law. Regarding regulation, some argue that this would best occur on a national level and reject the idea of using an international standard. Some argue that national military requirements be extended to peacekeeping forces when they are present in that region. Whichever the case, some sort of peacekeeping regulation must be put into place to ensure the safety of civilians when peacekeepers are present. Furthermore, the role of the peacekeeper in an armed conflict (involvement, payment, etc.) must be clearly delineated prior to deployment.

## **BLOC POSITIONS**

Unlike other topics, positions in this debate will not be geographically partitioned. In fact, the primary point of contention will likely surround the issue of individual nations' interests in PMCs for national purposes and secondarily, their views of peacekeeping forces should they be deployed locally. As a result the bloc positions are broken into: PMC-hiring nations, PMC-hosting nations, and nations with no PMC involvement.

### **PMC-hiring nations**

Nations such as the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, and South Africa are among the highest PMC-hiring nations. PMCs are able to free up other duties for the national militaries and these nations rely heavily on PMC support. They would likely support no changes to be made to the use of PMCs in peacekeeping efforts. As long as

the PMCs remain non-combative and carry out their assigned tasks, they are a welcome addition according to these nations. However, these nations would not like to be held accountable for actions taken by the PMCs that may be illegal. Given the recent outcry against PMCs, even these nations recognize the need for greater regulation and legal control, but not to the extent of banning them.

### **PMC-hosting nations**

PMCs are typically hosted by governments with poor infrastructure and governmental structure. Due to recent violations of humanitarian law, PMCs have gained a negative stigma and many PMC-hosting countries have called for their removal or stringent regulation. However, due to little framework and regulation it is often difficult for countries to prosecute humanitarian violators. Furthermore, these nations must worry about the possibility of destabilization or rebellions with PMCs potentially working with other non-state actors.

### **No PMC Involvement**

This group of nations, including the 32 that have ratified the mercenary convention, neither hire nor host PMCs. While the regulation or lack of regulation will not affect these nations, many lie very near to PMC-hosting nations. As a result, these countries will favor some kind of regulation. These nations will also encourage others to ratify the mercenary convention. Without ratification, there is no legal imperative to abide by the convention.



## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1) What is a peacekeeper?
- 2) What is a PMC?
- 3) Should these definitions be explicitly written into international law?
- 4) How can peacekeeping operations be best monitored?
- 5) How should peacekeepers act in response to armed conflict?
- 6) Should peacekeepers even be used in armed conflict?
- 7) How can PMCs be regulated by the UN and by the nations within which they are deployed?
- 8) What standards of behavior are required of peacekeepers?
- 9) How can PMCs be ensured to be under international (rather than national) control?
- 10) Should the UN even use private contractors? If not, what should they do?
- 11) How can the neutrality of humanitarian work be maintained?

## **RESEARCH AIDS**

(note: These are simply a starting point for your background research. Please make sure to thoroughly research your nation's policies in regards to this topic and what particular actions they support or have undertaken.)

<http://www.unrol.org/doc.aspx?n=brahimi+report+peacekeeping.pdf>

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## **REFERENCES**

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