

Forum:	Disarmament Committee (GA1)
Issue:	Sustaining the non-proliferation of chemical and biological weapons in conflict areas
Student Officers:	Özgür Kazaklı - Sena Morina - Emir Arda Değer

Introduction

Biological and chemical weapons are the weapons of mass destruction which are defined as weapons that threateningly carry the capacity to kill a large numbers of human, or cause great damage to the biosphere. Although the usage of chemical weapons were banned at times of war in 1925, and biological weapons in 1972, many nations still conduct researches on such weapons. It is known that the United States, Syria, North Korea, and Russia still produce chemical weapons by citing several factors such as terror risk, setting military balance with their rivals, and military threats from politically disputed nations. Recently, as the attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center have started the new era of asymmetric threats, which are the disputes between belligerents whose relative military power differs significantly, there is an ongoing threat that such weapons would be used in densely populated areas by the terrorist forces. In addition to terrorist forces, nations such as Saddam Hussein's Iraq and Muammar Gaddafi's Libya have also used chemical and biological weapons against civilians in order to restore and protect their political powers.

Although the issue of biological and chemical weapons has emerged recently, their production goes far back to the 12th century. When the Mongols surrounded The Castle of Crimea, it took them 3 months to seize the castle due to its strategic position. Finally, Genghis Khan suggested the production of the first biological weapon, catapults in which plague-stricken dead bodies would be launched into the castle, causing most of its inhabitants to die, resulting in Mongol victory. Since then, such biological weapons have been used many times: Russians used Genghis Khan's strategy against the Swedish in the 18th century. The second plague outbreak in Europe can be blamed on biological warfare. Later in history, starting from World War I, chemical and biological weapons were used much more commonly until their ban in 1925. Therefore, in World War II, biological weapons were commonly used. More recently, the issue of the non-proliferation of chemical and biological weapons has re-emerged following the usage of chemical weapons by Libya, Iraq, and most recently in 2017 by the Assad government in Syria.

Biological and chemical weapons lead to numerous issues, including not only outbreaks of deadly diseases and mass death, but also political and economic disputes among nations threatened by each

other. Eventually, the adoption of chemical and biological weapons begins to spread among Member States who feel unsettled due to the lack of power balance. The escalation of chemical and biological armament is slowly reading to an arms race, posing an unignorable threat to public security. Considering that such armament fuels and is fueled by political polarization, this issue is highly related to RCIMUN 2018's theme.

Definition of Key Terms

Weapons of mass destruction (WMD): Weapons of mass destructions are radiological, nuclear, chemical or biological weapons that have the potential to kill significantly number of people and cause great damage to the biosphere. This term was firstly used in 1937 by the archbishop of Canterbury in reference to the aerial bombardment to Guernica, and then started to commonly be used during the World War II due to their usage. This term basically refers to non-conventional weapons.

Chemical Weapon: Chemical weapon is a mass destruction weapon that uses chemicals formulated to inflict death or harm the biosphere. Its prohibition became official in 1925 with Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. Unfortunately, only 133 nations are listed as the state parties to the treaty. Also, signed in 1993, Chemical Weapons Convention outlaws the production of the chemical weapons.

Biological Weapon: Biological weapon is a mass destruction weapon that biological toxins or infectious agents with intent to inflict death and mass destruction. Biological weapons were commonly used in World War II due to prohibition of chemical weapons. Biological weapons were outlawed by the Biological Weapons Convention in 1972. However, until a recent date al-Qaeda and several other terrorist organisations that had ties with al-Qaeda had programs to produce biological weapons.

Non-proliferation: The prevention of weapons of mass destruction in order to protect the public security and prevent political disputes that may rise.

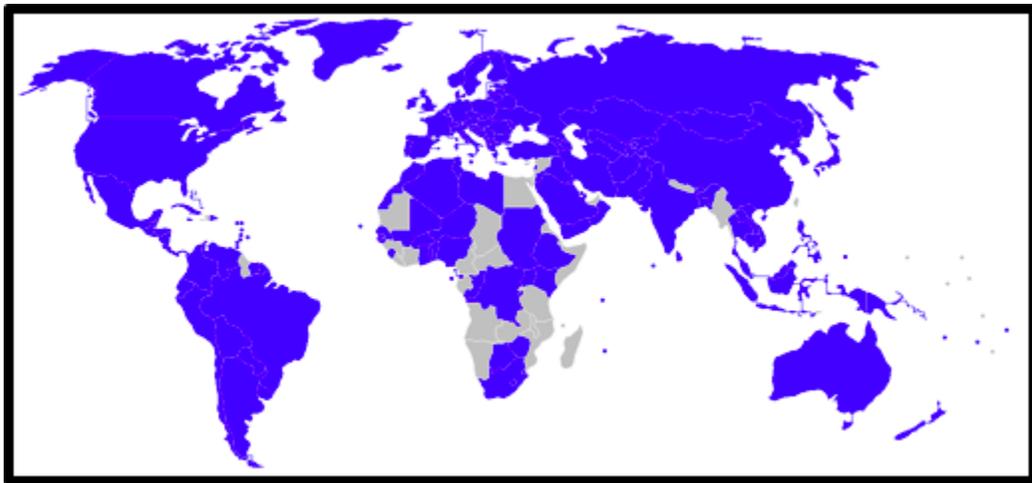
General Overview

As it stands, the UN is the center around which the international disarmament of biological and chemical weapons will take place. Today, there are many organizations, UN subsidiary organs and independent ones alike, that work toward the non-proliferation of chemical and biological weapons. Significant

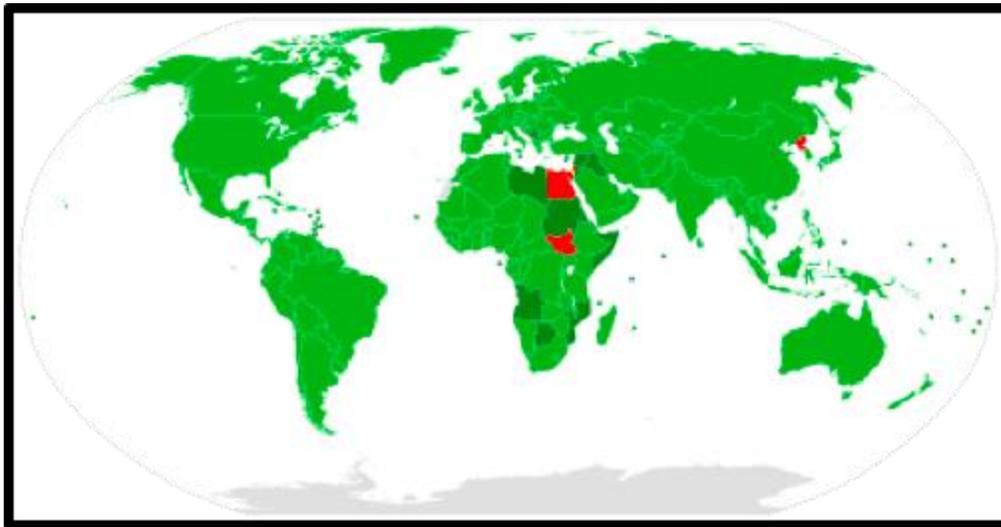
organizations of such sorts include the Office for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), The Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation and the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR).

The Legal Status Regarding Biological and Chemical Weapons

The ban on chemical and biological weapons dates back to the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which prohibited the use of “asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases, and of all analogous liquids, materials or devices”. Mainly, the ban was widened and tightened to include the use, stockpiling, production and storage of biological and chemical weaponry prohibited with the Biological Weapons Convention of 1972 and Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993, both of which a vast majority of Member States have signed. The signatory and non-signatory Member States can be seen below respectively:



Picture 1: “Signatories of the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention”



Picture 2: "Signatories of the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention"

Biological and chemical weapons are categorized under "weapons of mass destruction (WMD)", a fitting description considering the fact that 57,163 lives have been lost since the 1925 Geneva Protocol due to the direct use of chemical and biological weaponry. The fact that the majority of the world took part in treaties such as the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the biological and chemical weapons conventions of 1972 and 1993, would lead one to presume that the number would be much lower. As a result of many Member States' applications of the treaties' terms and conditions, the production and stockpiling of these weapons have been drastically decreased. However, there are other preventative factors that limit the effectiveness of these agreements.

As it can be seen in Images 1 and 2, there are still some Member States that have not taken part in the efforts for the worldwide disarmament regarding biological and chemical weapons. This is clearly damaging to the effectiveness of international initiatives, since although prohibited and punishable under international law, non-signatories can use their biological and chemical weapons capacities as leverage, thus creating fear in Member States worldwide and encouraging the spread of chemical and biological armament.

The Use of Biological and Chemical Weapons in Conflict Zones in Recent History

The recent focus regarding the use of WMDs in conflict zones has been on no place other than the world's current central conflict: The Syrian Civil War. It all started after a Syrian foreign ministry spokesman gave a formal statement announcing the Syrian government's possession of chemical weapons in 2012. Since then, foreign pressure on Syria has considerably increased. In the year of 2013, reports of multiple usages of chemical weapons in Syria have been confirmed by investigations carried out by the USA and France, as well as one led by the UN and authorized by former Secretary-General

Ban-Ki Moon. However, despite including the amount of evidence pointing toward the Assad regime's chemical weapon use, none of the reports officially concluded that the Syrian government was, in fact, in possession and use of chemical weapons (Sanders-Zakre). It is also worthy to note that the investigation carried out by the UN was fully authorized to search for information, yet not to hold any faction participating in the Syrian Civil War as responsible.

The Syrian government denied all accusations regarding the use of chemical weapons, yet agreed to conform to the terms of the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention and turn down all of chemical weapon stockpiles to the UN. There have been reports of chemical weapon attacks in Syria since early 2014, even after when the Syrian government officially finished the shipment of the chemical weapons outside of the country for the disposal of these weapons (Sanders-Zakre). Attempts of further investigation and condemnation have been consistently vetoed by the Russian Federation. It is believed that the Syrian government still holds chemical weapon capacities, raising suspicion about whether the disarmament attempts were successful.

Biological warfare is less frequent in comparison to the use of chemical weapons, but still existent. Although very common before the 1925 Geneva Protocol, the use of biological weapons has decreased. There have been instances of biological weapons use by both government forces and terrorist groups, one example being the guerrilla insurgency in Rhodesia between 1975-1980 (Cross). However, not enough information is present for an extensive investigation of the situation since Rhodesia was succeeded by Zimbabwe, which makes the situation much more difficult to follow. Although not used as often as chemical weapons, biological weapons also pose a serious threat to human living conditions in many parts of the world due to their capacity to harm.

Reactions Against the Possession, Production and/or Usage of Chemical and Biological Weapons

So far, the international community has been highly involved in the fight against the use of chemical weapons. One of the most involved Member States has been the United States, with the two major foreign interventions by Western powers having been fueled by the possession and usage of chemical weapons. The interventions in Libya and Iraq in 2011 and 2003, have respectively followed the reported possession of chemical weapons by the Gaddafi and Hussein governments. Gaddafi's Libya, despite being a signatory of the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention, was accused of possessing and using chemical weapons. Following the intervention in 2011, 2 tons of mustard gas were found in many artillery bombs and shells (Pike). In Iraq's case, however, it was finalized during Iraq weapons inspections in 2005 that Iraq was not in possession of chemical weapons ("Iraq Weapons Inspections"). However, it is not certain whether the Hussein was in possession of chemical weapons before the intervention, since the

justification for the invasion of Iraq in 2003 was centered on that claim. This situation brought along many discussions and was shown as the reason for the plethora of problems Iraq faces today. For any future attempts, delegates should also bare in mind that thorough and accurate research prior to any attempt such as a military intervention would be highly crucial for solution attempts.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

North Korea is estimated to have assembled 10-20 nuclear warheads and it has the material for an estimated 30-60 nuclear weapons. It is also believed that North Korea has chemical and biological weapons programs operating actively. Pyongyang has tested an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) twice in July 2017, and it is capable of reaching the U.S mainland. It has withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 2003, but concerns for this withdrawal is are still ongoing.

United States of America

The United States chemical weapons program began in the World War I and ended when U.S signed the Chemical Weapons Convention. The destruction of all chemical stockpiles began in 1985 and it is still ongoing. U.S participated in the formulation of the Hague Convention that aimed to ban chemical warfare, but U.S never joined the article that prohibited chemical weapons.

Russia

It is also estimated that Russia is one of the countries that possess the largest nuclear weapon stockpiles. There is no exact number or information related to their chemical weapons since they are being held as a national secret. Russia also signed the Chemical Weapons Convention and it is believed that they achieved complete destruction on September 27, 2017.

Syria

In 2013, US and Syria signed an agreement that aimed to lead to the elimination of all stockpiles in Syria by 2014. It is believed that Syria fist received its chemical weapons from Saudi Arabia. There are four main sites that are known as chemical weapon production sites: one near Damascus, near Homs, Hama and one in al-Safir.

Iraq

Even before the Operation Desert Storm, Iraq had already begun to build chemical weapons. Iraq used chemical weapons in the war against Iran and also against its Kurdish population in 1980. UN established UNSCOM (United Nations Special Commission) in 1991 that aimed to destroy and remove all stocks of agents and types of chemical or biological weapons in Iraq. UNSCOM left Iraq in 1998 and it had removed a large portion of its chemical weapon potential. But still, there remains an important uncertainty on this topic.

Timeline of Events

August 1914	Chemical weapons were used by the French Army against German soldiers
22 April 1915	Germans launch the first successful gas attack against Allied troops
May 1918	U.S establishes Edgewood Arsenal for the purpose of researching chemical weapons
11 November 1918	World War One ends, chemical weapons caused around 1.3 casualties (The first modern use of chemical weapons)
1925	Geneva Protocol - bans the use of chemical and biological weapons in warfare
1939-1945	Chemical weapons were used in Nazi concentration camps
1980-1988	Iran- Iraq War. Iraq used chemical weapons against Iran

1993	Chemical Weapons Convention is formed
2013	Syrian demonstrators are killed by their military's use of sarin.

UN Involvement

UN was heavily involved in the situation and also they passed various resolutions regarding to the prohibition of development, production or stockpiling of chemical weapons. But, still there are countries that supposedly possess many types of mass destructions; including biological and chemical weapons. UN Security Council met several times to discuss the chemical weapons used by the Syrian government against its civilians, but most of the resolutions were vetoed by Russia. Furthermore, Russia has vetoed 11 resolutions, and recently Russia vetoed a joint investigation of the UN and Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) whose job it was to identify the culprits behind the chemical attacks.

Relevant UN Documents

Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction- Resolution adopted by the General Assembly(7 December, 2015,A/RES/70/41)

Framework for Elimination of Syrian Chemical Weapons during the Syrian civil war.- Resolution adopted by the Security Council (27 September, 2013, S/RES/2118)

Treaties and Events

Geneva Protocol(1925): It prohibits the use of chemical and biological weapons in warfare.

Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC): this convention aims to eliminate the entire category of weapons of mass destruction by prohibiting the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, transfer, or use by the States Parties.

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) - the goal of this organization is to prevent chemistry from being used for warfare, thereby strengthening international security.

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

There have been several attempts to resolve the issue of sustaining the non-proliferation of chemical and biological weapons in conflict areas, but since most of them took temporary actions, they were either vetoed by Member States or didn't resolve the issue permanently. Furthermore, as most of the countries continue to develop their chemical / biological weapon programs and also keep them as a state secret, direct measures can't be taken.

Possible Solutions

One of the key points for sustaining non-proliferation is ensuring transparency among Member States. Ensuring transparency would prevent the illegal production of the chemical and biological weapons for setting military balance with their rivals. Establishing an organization for reporting any usage or production of biological or chemical weapons would create mutual trust between nations, which would prevent potential chemical and biological weapon programs for setting military balance.

The delegates also should decide on measures and incentives to be given in order to promote the ratification of the Geneva Protocol and Chemical Weapons Convention by the Member States that haven't signed these yet. The ratification of the agreements would fully prevent the further usage or the production of the mass destruction weapons as it would allow sanctions for the production of such weapons herein after.

Eradication of the chemical and biological weapon production facilities would be another step. Especially in the MENA region, although the recent developments have halted the chemical and biological weapon programs, the facilities are intact. In case of a government change in the future, this creates the possibility of the reactivation of these facilities. Thus, the eradication of the chemical and biological weapon facilities, which are mostly inactive, is a crucial step.

Monitoring the conflict areas is another step that should be taken. Assigning UN officials for surveillance for a potential usage of chemical and biological weapons would allow the UN to determine which parties are capable of producing such weapons, and it would lead to sanctions.

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