*Delegates*,

Welcome to the thirty-eighth annual Kennesaw State University High School Model United Nations (HSMUN) Conference. My name is Sam Brown and I will be the Director for the General Assembly First Committee. For a brief introduction of myself, I am a 5th-year at Kennesaw State University pursuing a degree in Informational Technologies. I have served as a Country Chair at Kennesaw State and have gone to multiple competitions with the collegiate Model United Nations Team. I have many hobbies such as Dungeons and Dragons and reading. One of my players in a D&D campaign I am running is the AD for GA Plen Anna Santmier.

With me is Assistant Director, Amure Bendross.This is his first year spending conference with us all.l. He is a Junior looking to get a BBA in Entrepreneurship. And while he is fairly new to MUN, he does already have conference experience and looks forward to bringing all of his knowledge with him as I dias. Outside of MUN, he loves fitness, baking, and music. In fact, he has baked for many fundraising events for MUN, using his hobby to support the organization.

The General Assembly First Committee’s primary objective is to deal with disarmament, global challenges and threats to peace that affect the international community and provide solutions to the challenges in the international security regime and stability worldwide.[[1]](#footnote-0)

**The topics under discussion for General Assembly First Committee are:**

1. **Addressing the Effect of Nuclear Infrastructures on Civilian Populations**
2. **Analyzing the Effect of the Illicit Arms Trade on Women and Minorities**

Each Member State’s delegation within this committee is expected to submit a position paper presenting their ideas for both agenda topics. A Position Paper is a short essay describing your Member State’s history and position on the issues at hand. There are three key parts to any successful position paper: history, current status of the issue, and possible solutions for the future. Information for properly formatting the position papers, as well as valuable advice for writing a quality paper, can be found in the Delegate Preparation section of the HSMUN webpage (http://conference.kennesaw.edu/hsmun/). Delegates are reminded that papers should be no longer than two pages in length with titles in size 12 and text in size 10-12 Times New Roman. Citations should be footnoted in Chicago style formatting, such as those used inside this guide. Furthermore, plagiarism in an academic setting is unacceptable and will nullify any score for the paper in question. During the grading process, we will be utilizing the university’s plagiarism checker. Wikipedia is a wonderful place to begin researching, but we highly encourage the use of peer-reviewed academic articles or trusted media sources. The objective of a position paper is to present the diplomatic position of your Member State on both agenda topics as accurately as possible. ***All position papers MUST be sent to ksuhsmun2023@gmail.com by February 24th, 2023. Late papers will be accepted until February 28th, 2023 with points penalized.***

**History of the General Assembly First Committee**

*“We owe it to our peoples as well as to future generations to devise remedies that would lead to better lives, better societies and a better world.”*

-Ms. Sonia Elliott, Secretary of the General Assembly First Committee

The General Assembly is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations (UN), established in 1945 with the ratification of the United Nations Charter.[[2]](#footnote-1) The General Assembly is composed of all 193 UN Member States, and has the power to discuss any matter “within the scope of the present Charter or relating to the powers and functions of any organs provided for in the present Charter,” and to make recommendations to Member States or the Security Council regarding those matters.[[3]](#footnote-2) Though these recommendations are only suggestions and are not binding, resolutions put forth by this body often have a strong influence on how Member States act. Primarily, the General Assembly functions to review reports of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council; advise international political cooperation; foster international cooperation in social, economic, cultural, educational and health fields; and to promote peace between nations.[[4]](#footnote-3)

The General Assembly First Committee, also referred to as the Disarmament and International Security (DISEC) Committee, is responsible for dealing with disarmament and threats and challenges to peace in the global community.[[5]](#footnote-4) The General Assembly First is charged with creating resolutions to address these challenges and making recommendations for Member States and the Security Council. This committee works closely with the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament to address all matters pertinent to international security and disarmament, including matters within the scope of the Charter, matters pertinent to other organs of the UN, to “the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security,” and matters concerning cooperation in disarmament or regulation of arms.[[6]](#footnote-5)

The General Assembly First is often criticized as being ineffective, since its resolutions are not binding and cannot be enforced. However, the committee has made a considerable number of achievements since its establishment. The Committee has accomplished treaties that ban biological and chemical weapons through resolutions such as the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (A/C.1/65/L.20), and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (A/C.1/65/L.23).[[7]](#footnote-6) The General Assembly First also continues to make progress towards banning nuclear testing and eliminating nuclear weapons altogether.[[8]](#footnote-7) In its sixty-first session, the committee passed resolutions “condemning surplus weapon stockpiles,” reached an agreement on collaborating to trace black market arms, and worked to build the needed trust between nations to implement necessary measures to make progress.[[9]](#footnote-8) Finally, significant progress has been made in the disarmament of conventional weapons and small arms, “banning certain weapons with indiscriminate effects; curbing use of cluster munition and mines; taking action on proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and setting global rules governing the trade in conventional weapons through the recent Arms Trade Treaty.” Several key resolutions addressing conventional weapons were passed in the First Committee’s 65th session. As pointed out by Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the UN General Assembly, despite these achievements, “a quick look around our world today, also demonstrates very clearly that there remain simply far too many weapons in circulation – weapons that are fuelling deadly conflicts and incredible instability.”[[10]](#footnote-9) Unfortunately, as weapons are being eliminated, more are being invented and produced.

The DISEC Committee focuses primarily on the security of Member States and employs a variety of resources to ensure that Member States adhere to a set of standards regarding their security. These measures include working closely with both the UN and its constituent Member States to employ contemporary security measures and monitoring systems, updating technology to further ensure the borders of Member States are secured and protected, as well as promoting disarmament as a means to ensure peace and stability throughout the international community. Disarmament, in this context, refers to the reorganization of military powers across regions, either for the purposes of assuaging conflict or to further bolster a Member State’s security due to its thinly spread military armaments.[[11]](#footnote-10) Through these means, the GA First Committee provides a space for discussion of the positions of individual Member States, so as to ensure that every member of the international body is heard. By providing a space for discussion, Member States can move past the primeval topic of “international security” and can instead focus on “international cooperation” as a means to intersperse the benefits of modern globalization for both Member States and the common people of the international body.[[12]](#footnote-11)

1. **Addressing the Effect of Nuclear Infrastructures on Civilian Populations**

***Introduction***

Many Member States, whether using fissile materials for military or industrial purposes, have in some way impacted civilian populations. That impact may be non-physical in the way of increased stress due to the history of nuclear uses. Militarily, the testing of nuclear weapons has affected untold numbers of citizens around the globe. Industrially, the generation of nuclear power has been relatively safe, but the few failures in the past have caused widespread destruction, displacing hundreds of thousands and still affecting millions to this day. Overall the use of nuclear energy throughout history has been filled with negative effects on civilian populations, therefore it is understandable why many civilians are anxious about using this technology.

***History***

On July 16th, 1945, the first nuclear bomb was tested in the deserts of New Mexico.[[13]](#footnote-12) Just 21 days later, on August 6th, 1945, was the first nuclear attack carried out with a bomb being dropped on Hiroshima, and three days later a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Though estimates about the death count ranges, generally studies put the deaths between 100,000-200,000 people for both bombings.[[14]](#footnote-13) Furthermore the long-term health effects of the nuclear weapons at the time appear to not be as significant as the general public believes, with current generations having minimal effects from the left-over radiation from the bombings.[[15]](#footnote-14) That is not to say that nuclear fallout from these weapons wouldn’t always be a concern as testing continued.

Between the first test in 1945, and the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1996 there were 2,048 tests of nuclear weapons.[[16]](#footnote-15) During this time period the most problematic tests were those that took place in the open air, referred to as atmospheric testing and underwater testing of nuclear weapons. About 25% of nuclear tests were atmospheric tests, but concern over the nuclear fallout generated by these tests grew so large that during the cold war in 1963, the Partial Test Ban Treaty was signed, banning atmospheric testing.[[17]](#footnote-16) The few underwater tests that also took place generated considerable radioactive fallout through water and steam generated by the explosion, resulting in their ban through the same treaty. It is hard to predict the exact damage done from the nuclear fallout from these tests but the implications are sever, with the United States’ Center of Disease Control reporting that all people in the United States who have been alive since 1951, have been exposed to radiation from nuclear testing increasing their risk for cancer, particularly thyroid cancer due to a radioactive isotope produced by nuclear testing.[[18]](#footnote-17)

Nuclear Energy has had a more complicated history, with the first nuclear reactor capable of producing electricity being completed in 1951, starting a focus on using nuclear energy to create, rather than destroy.[[19]](#footnote-18) Unfortunately, due to concerns about nuclear fallout from civilian populations and the lack of concern about carbon emissions and energy security this field did not receive much development, with the amount of nuclear reactors worldwide stagnating from the 1970s to 2002.[[20]](#footnote-19) With the third generation of nuclear reactors providing a much needed boost to the nuclear energy industry there has been growth, but still many civilian populations are concerned about the danger nuclear reactors possess. Chernobyl caused the evacuation of 350,000 civilians, with a 1,000 square mile or 2,600 square kilometer area being designated as the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone based on the fallout generated by the incident.

***Current Situation***

Worldwide there has been little concern about the effects of nuclear fallout from nuclear weapons testing due the the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty stopping most nuclear tests, since its signing only 10 tests have been conducted.[[21]](#footnote-20) Currently, however, there seems to be a change in this sentiment with ongoing global conflicts involving nuclear powers and rising tensions surrounding these or potential new conflicts. Additionally, with the lack of a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) program between the United States of America and the Russian Federation, the two Member States with the largest amount of nuclear weapons, there has not been a significant decline in nuclear weapons possessed by the two Member States. On the 22nd of May, 2020, the United States withdrew from the Treaty on Open Skies, allowing for unarmed surveillance flights over the territories of any party to the treaty, promptingRussia to announce their withdrawal in January of 2021, formally exiting on June 7th of the same year.

In regards to nuclear energy, there poses serious risks in the event of an accident, failsafe failure, or natural disaster. In Fukushima, Japan, a tsunami isolated Fukushima’s nuclear reactor. This resulted in several explosions and meltdowns of their reactors, and during the events of getting the reactors under control there were many evacuation orders in a continuously expanding radius around the nuclear reactor.[[22]](#footnote-21) However, despite the severity of this incident its actual effects were rather minimal compared to Chernobyl even despite the more powerful reactors. This is primarily due to the dedication of first responders staying at the site to get the reactor cores under control. It is largely regarded as a success story in regards to containing a meltdown and today the background radiation effects are rather minimal in most areas affected during the meltdown.[[23]](#footnote-22)

Despite this success in containing a meltdown, general concern and unease over nuclear power plants persist, and many Member States continue to search for new ways to reassure civilians and maintain absolute safety over radioactive materials. Finland has placed a focus on the nuclear waste that comes from nuclear power, which is the primary source of radiation in the industry and in the event of meltdowns. Finland is taking to storing nuclear waste deep in the ground, roughly 450 meters below the surface in the bedrock of Onkalo, where it can safely remain for thousands of years.[[24]](#footnote-23) Finland has seen great success in reassuring non-professionals while also maximizing their nuclear power industry and ensuring safety.

***Conclusion***

While the world has come a long way in regards to understanding radiation and nuclear energy there is still a long way to go for civilian populations to be reassured in these same regards. The history of nuclear weapons has inspired a lot of fear and uncertainty in regards to nuclear energy. Still in regards to nuclear energy there has been some slow and careful development to ensure as much safety in these power plants as possible. There has also been a slow rise in the general understanding of these events alleviating some fear towards nuclear energy.

***Committee Directive***

The General Assembly First Committee should primarily be focused on what they can do within this realm of work. As the committee on Disarmament and International Security there should be a primary focus on encouraging Member States to reduce nuclear weapons while also ensuring that nuclear reactors are primarily used to safely generate energy as opposed to creating fuel for these weapons. Additionally the committee should look to raise the stability of civilians through education about the actual effects of nuclear fallout, lowering concerns about nuclear energy and weapons. Finally, DISEC should look to utilize its attached offices and other bodies to give recommendations to Member States.

1. **Analyzing the Effect of the Illicit Arms Trade on Women and Minorities**

***Introduction***

The effect that the illicit arms trade has on women and minorities is known to be very real, but exact numbers on a large scale are very hard to come by. Many non-state actors would nott have the means to perpetuate violence without access to these weapons by the illicit arms trade. During the 7442nd meeting of the United Nations Security Council in 2015 the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon remarked that the easy access to weapons was a, “major factor in the over 250 conflicts of the past decade.”[[25]](#footnote-24) Outside of armed groups, small arms trafficked through the illicit arms trade can have a very real effect as well, with individual robbings or hate crimes across an entire Member State adding up to a significant effect on these groups as a whole.

***History***

The sale of arms as a whole has a storied history, with the first arms trade routes as we know them today beginning with the triangle trade routes between Europe, Africa, and North America.[[26]](#footnote-25) These routes would expand with time and also with the industrial revolution allowing for better firearms to be made. During both World Wars, however, did the legitimate arms market experience blocks of sales being formed between the Allies and the Central Powers and the second world war between the Allies and the Axis. During the Cold War is when the legitimate arms market can be considered its most questionable, as the increasingly superior firearms had Member States, Manufacturers, and Suppliers selling off old stock to non-state actors, militant groups, and other organizations.[[27]](#footnote-26) A prime example of an NGO selling arms would be during the Spanish civil war, when The Greek Powder and Cartridge Company exported weapons to Franco and the republicans in spain.[[28]](#footnote-27) As for Member States selling arms, there are plenty of examples during the Cold War, in which the United States and the Soviet Union would sell arms to both sides of a conflict to conduct a proxy war, such as with the Republic of China and the Chinese Communist Party, or both sides of the Vietnam conflict.[[29]](#footnote-28)

All of these conflicts and the sale of arms during the cold war would lead to an influx of weapons into the market as these conflicts came to a close, along with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Along with the collapse of the Soviet Union came quite possibly the single largest private arms trader in the history of the world, Viktor Bout.[[30]](#footnote-29) Viktor Bout acquired a fleet of military aircraft from the collapsed Soviet Union and used them to supply weapons to conflicts across large swathes of the globe to NGOs, Militant Groups, Member States, and even UN peacekeepers at times.[[31]](#footnote-30) Bout’s business assisted France with supplying goods to UN peacekeepers after the Rwandan Genocide, and provided weapons to anti-taliban forces during the 1990s.[[32]](#footnote-31) However, he had also provided weapons to destabilize Sierra Leone, delivered weapons to warlords in Central and North Africa, transported weapons across Eastern Europe, and more.[[33]](#footnote-32)

Historically the Illicit Arms Market has been dominated by a “Merchant of Death,” from era to era, with Viktor Bout being the latest.[[34]](#footnote-33) These individuals control a significant portion of the illicit arms market and thus putting a stop to them has historically seen a large reduction in the trade of illicit arms. The conflicts that these “Merchants of Death,” fuel all have one thing in common, their disproportionate effect on Women and Minorities. These marginalized groups are often the target of exploitation for corrupt organizations, militant groups, and terrorist organizations as they do not have the same level of social protection.

***Current Situation***

Viktor Bout has been released from prison and is once again in the international illicit arms market operating as a “Merchant of Death.”[[35]](#footnote-34) With current ongoing conflicts the role of the illicit arms market can not be understated and the potential for increased damage due to his efforts is immense. Simultaneously the protection of the legal importation of guns must have a greater importance of protection placed on it. With NGOs selling weapons the threat of those weapons falling into the illegal market is high. In São Paulo Brazil between 2011 and 2020 more than 33,000 weapons were diverted from the legal market to the illegal market, with a minimum of 8% or 2,640 of those weapons being diverted from imports.[[36]](#footnote-35)

Worldwide the numbers are much more alarming, within the years of 2016 and 2017 more than 550,000 firearms were seized by authorities of Member States.[[37]](#footnote-36) Of these seizures though, only 9% were seized during the trafficking stage, with most being seized during possession at 64% and 8% being seized during their use.[[38]](#footnote-37) A large focus of current efforts to halt the illicit arms trade is centered around “tracing” or attempting to find the point in a weapons lifespan in which it was diverted from the legal market to the illegal market.[[39]](#footnote-38) Finding these points can provide a significant reduction in the weapons provided to illegal markets, but these aren’t always easy. Many different methods are used to divert weapons, such as having false recipients, bribery or corruption of manufacturers transporters, the illegal sale of weapons, diverting exports, clandestine shipments, or sometimes simple mislabeling of a shipment can land weapons on the illegal market.

***Conclusion***

While the evidence of the illicit arms trade’s effect on women and minorities is clear, the understanding of that effect is no=. The illicit arms trade fuels conflicts worldwide displacing women and minorities or worse killing them, but a focus has been placed on the study of the trade itself rather than the effects of it and how to counter those. While the illicit arms trade will evolve with the authorities' attempts to halt it, Member States can at least make efforts to alleviate the impact that the illicit arms trade has on those most affected by it. Individual cases and studies can be found, but a larger picture must be painted for an adequate response to be made.

***Committee Directive***

This committee should primarily focus on generating a report understanding the effects of the illicit arms trade on women and minorities. Furthermore this committee should focus on generating a framework to assist Member States with seizing illicit arms or preventing them from falling into the illicit market. To that end, formulating ways to make it easier for authorities to trace firearms to their point of origin to figure out where they were diverted may help. Finally this committee should encourage Member States to place a larger focus on the security of their arms industries and ensure greater transparency in their operation, at least to the governments of their Member States.

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