1st Main Committee (Disarmament and International Security)
1.1 Post-Conflict Disarmament of Non-State Actors

Modern conflicts are no longer just conflicts between states; non-state actors often become significantly involved as well. These non-state actors, which can include terrorist groups and groups of underrepresented minorities, often obtain large quantities of arms to advance their cause. Once the conflict is resolved, however, significant quantities of arms remain with these actors, posing a potential threat to local populations and governments.

The disarmament of these non-state actors in post-conflict situations is of paramount concern to the international community. Non-state actors often lack the structure and oversight that states have, and as a result little information is available about the arms they possess. Their arms can easily be lost and obtained by third parties, compounding the potential for their misuse.

In the case of terrorist organizations, arms often remain with local militias long after the parent organization has been dissolved. This provides an existing network of arms that new groups can take advantage of. A recent example of this is the Islamic State, which used arms already circulating in northern Iraq from previous terrorist groups to build its military force in Iraq and Syria.

In order to prevent arms from falling into the hands of terrorist organizations such as the Islamic State, the international community must establish a framework to promote disarmament after conflict. However, this task is difficult. Many non-state actors obtain support from other states who can supply them with arms during conflict. However, states have historically shown little concern for the return of these arms after their goals in the conflict have been achieved. In addition, non-state actors often lack the necessary oversight to keep track of the distribution and use of weapons.

It is evident that weapons currently possessed by non-state actors must be removed from circulation. However, division remains as to who should be responsible for these weapons. Additionally, members of the international community have expressed concern over the distribution of weapons by nation-states to non-state actors, and believe that states should better monitor the use and distribution of their weapons.

Topics for Consideration:

Should states’ supply of arms to non-state actors be limited? If so, what can the body do to limit this supply of arms?

Who should be responsible for the removal from circulation of arms currently possessed by non-state actors?

What can the body do to encourage better oversight of arms by non-state actors?

What can the body do to address the threat posed by the circulation of arms between non-state actors?
Under what circumstances should non-state actors be permitted to possess arms?

**Bibliography:**


1st Main Committee (Disarmament and International Security)
1.2 Prevention of Usage of Cluster Munitions

Cluster munitions are explosive weapons that release smaller submunitions. This most commonly takes the form of a cluster bomb, which ejects smaller bomblets that pose great risk to civilians. Cluster bombs can be used for a variety of purposes, including the destruction of vehicles, runways, and power grids, the dispersion of landmines, and, on occasion, the spreading of leaflets. The first major use of cluster bombs was by the United States during the Vietnam War.

The international community has worked to stop the use of cluster munitions, with limited success. The Convention on Cluster Munitions was held in Dublin, Ireland in May 2008. Those who signed onto the resulting agreement pledged to abstain from using cluster munitions. Thirty states ratified the agreement on August 1, 2010. As of October 1, 2015, 118 states have signed on. However, there are many states who have chosen not to ratify the agreement.

Many states still possess cluster munitions and refuse to dispose of them. For example, China, Israel, Russia, and the United States have still not ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Many unexploded cluster munitions can be found throughout the world from previous use by states. The Syrian government is using cluster munitions (allegedly supplied by Russia) in Syria’s ongoing civil war. Although positive steps have been taken, more must be done to address the threats posed by cluster munitions.

Topics for Consideration:

What can the body do to encourage states to ratify and abide by the Convention on Cluster Munitions?

How can the body address the threats posed by cluster munitions without infringing on national sovereignty?

How should existing cluster munitions be safely disposed of?

What enforcement mechanism and sanctions should be put in place for those ratifying countries who fail to abide by the Conference on Cluster Munitions?

What can the body do to address the threat posed by unexploded cluster munitions?

Bibliography:


Nearly one-third of all states in the world today have contracted private military contractors. The number of private military contractors in Iraq on behalf of the United States exceeded the number of American troops by over 18,000. In April 2009, the United Kingdom’s armed forces assumed control of Iraqi combat operations, yet continued the use of private military contractors. Private military contractors less transparent than traditional military forces, and are able to conduct military operations without the political and bureaucratic constraints that apply to state actors. For example, they can move their forces and can demobilize once their task is complete quicker than traditional military forces. Private military contractors are also able to specialize in specific tasks needed by states.

The increasing use of private military contractors in armed conflicts between sovereign states raises the issue of the regulation of these non-state actors. Non-state actors assigned military operations by states are governed by international humanitarian law as it applies to states. However, international law is designed with conventional military forces in mind, and there are currently no international organizations regulating the use of private military contractors by states. Private military contractors have been accused of human rights violations including the destruction of personal property, sexual harassment, and unlawful killings. For this reason, the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions forbid private military contractors from operations involving the detention, transfer, and interrogation of prisoners. The international community must act to address the lack of adequate regulation of the use of private military contractors by sovereign states.

**Topics for Consideration:**

What can the body do to regulate the use of private military contractors by states? How should private military contractors be held accountable?

What can the body do to prevent human rights abuses by private military contractors?

What can the body do to resolve the ambiguous legal status of private military contractors?

**Bibliography:**


1st Main Committee (Disarmament and International Security)

1.4 Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear weapons are considered to be the most dangerous weapons on the planet. They can yield unimaginable destruction and are understandable feared by all governments. Yet despite the danger of nuclear weapons, nearly 22,000 are believed to currently exist spread between several nations. The three main ways that nuclear weapons are delivered are gravity bombs, ballistic missiles, and cruise missiles.

The United Nations has been clearly committed to finding a solution to the conundrum of nuclear weapons. Since the United Nations came into function, one of its primary goals was to deal with the proliferation of nuclear weapons. In fact, the very first resolution ever adopted by the United Nations General Assembly was in 1946, creating a commission to look into problems stemming from atomic energy. The most famous action taken is the Treaty for the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Signed in 1968 and enacted in 1970, the Treaty currently has 191 nations, including the five designated nuclear weapon states: The United States of America, The United Kingdom, China, Russia, and France.

However, there are other states that possess nuclear capability, including India, North Korea, and Pakistan. Recently Iran and North Korea have been in the news for disturbances regarding nuclear weapons. Iran’s nuclear program is supposed to be shut down. North Korea has been repeatedly testing different delivery technologies (missiles) against the wishes of the United Nations. The danger of nuclear war is perhaps more real than it has been since 1945, and it is critical this body act to address the threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Topics for Consideration:

What can the body do to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and delivery technologies?

Should states that possess nuclear weapons be required to disarm? If so, how should this be accomplished?

What can the body do to address the threat posed by states who seek to acquire or expand nuclear capabilities without the approval of the international community?

Bibliography:

