



FORUM: First Committee to the General Assembly (DISEC)

QUESTION OF: Preventing the Use of Chemical Weapons

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POSITION: Deputy-Chair

INTRODUCTION:

“Chemical weapons simply have no place in the 21st century. Progress in this vital area will help generate momentum to meet our goal to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction.” –Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary-General

Since World War I, where the modern use of chemical weapons began, over one million casualties caused by chemical weapons have been reported globally. And even though so many attempts to tackle this threat to our global society have been made, the number is still growing, for example in Syria, being one of the most alarming cases seen today.

So how can the United Nations as the largest political union on earth solve this issue and find a long-term solution in order to work towards achieving the goal of eliminating all weapons of mass destruction?

In order to find the answer for such a question, each and every member state will have to be willing to work alongside other nations and to find compromises to prevent even more suffering of both the environment and humanity.



HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT:

DATE	DESCRIPTION OF EVENT
22 nd April 1915	First large-scale gas attack during World War I in Belgium. During the war over 90,000 people were killed and over 1,000,000 casualties have been reported. 124,000 tonnes of chemical agent were released into the environment
17 th of June 1925	Geneva Protocol: The protocol prohibits the use of chemical weapons (further elaboration in Section V)
Vietnam War (1955-1975)	United States of America use “Agent Orange” in Vietnam, mainly for strategic deforestation causing dramatic consequences for both the environment and population
1983-1988	Iraqi chemical attacks against Iran during the Iran-Iraq war causing more than 100,000 estimated casualties considering long-term consequences
3 rd of September 1992	Chemical Weapons Convention: After twelve years of negotiation, the Convention is adopted, marking one of the most fundamental milestones in the fight against chemical weapons (further elaboration in Section V)
1994-1995	Nerve gas attacks by the Japanese cult Aum Shinrikyo (formally known as Aum Shinrikyo) in Tokyo’s subway and the city Matsumoto caused 19 deaths and several thousand casualties,



2013-2018

Several uses of chemical weapons causing hundreds of deaths in the Syrian Civil War have been reported and partly been confirmed by the UN (see Section IV Syria)

KEY TERMS:

-*Weapons of Mass Destruction:* Weapons of mass destruction constitute a class of weaponry with the potential to, in a single moment, kill millions of civilians, jeopardize the natural environment, and fundamentally alter the world and the lives of future generations through their catastrophic effects.

-*Chemical Weapon* (as defined by the Convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction, Paris 13 January 1993)

"Chemical Weapons" means the following, together or separately:

(a) Toxic chemicals and their precursors, except where intended for purposes not prohibited under this Convention, as long as the types and quantities are consistent with such purposes;

(b) Munitions and devices, specifically designed to cause death or other harm through the toxic properties of those toxic chemicals specified in subparagraph (a), which would be released as a result of the employment of such munitions and devices;

(c) Any equipment specifically designed for use directly in connection with the employment of munitions and devices specified in subparagraph (b).



COUNTRIES/ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED:

Syria

The United Nations officially confirmed the use of chemical weapons during the Syrian Civil War. The most severe attacks include the Goutha attack where several hundred people were reported dead with the Syrian Arab Republic's military being the main suspect of committing the attack due to having a large arsenal of the used weapons, however no party confessed. During the Syrian Civil War, there has been a huge number of reported incidents where Chemical Weapons were used with both the Syrian government as well as opposing parties being accused. Several countries, mainly western, did blame the Syrian government for several attacks.

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

"The mission of the OPCW is to implement the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention in order to achieve our vision for a world that is free of chemical weapons and of the threat of their use, and in which cooperation in chemistry for peaceful purposes for all is fostered. [...]"

-from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Mission Statement

EXPECTATIONS FOR POSITION PAPER:

You are expected to write a Position Paper that is a minimum of two pages long. The Position Paper should contain general information on the issue in relation to your country and specific policies your country introduced to act upon this issue.

Further questions you could also consider during your research:

- What is my country's/NGO's/IGO's/NMOS's history with chemical weapons?
- How has my country's/NGO's/IGO's/NMOS's position on chemical weapons changed over the last years?



- Has my country/NGO/IGO/NMOS signed, ratified or acceded the Chemical Weapons Convention?
- How can my country/NGO/IGO/NMOS help preventing further escalation in the use of chemical weapons in conflicts such as the Syrian Civil War?
- Are there any official statements regarding my country's/NGO's/IGO's/NMOS's position on chemical weapons?
- What is my country's/NGO's/IGO's/NMOS's position on the situation regarding the use of chemical weapons in Syria?
- How can my country/NGO/IGO/NMOS support the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons?

USEFUL LINKS/SOURCES:

- Official website of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons: <https://www.opcw.org>
- Official document of the Convention on the prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction, Paris 13 January 1993: http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.42_Conv%20Chemical%20weapons.pdf
- Basic information about chemical weapons: <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/chemical/>

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2012/10/422382> /last access: 7/27/2018

<https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/chemical/> /last access 7/27/2018

<http://unrcpd.org/wmd/> /last access: 7/27/2018

http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.42_Conv%20Chemical%20weapons.pdf /last access: 7/27/2018

<https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/chemical/> /last access: 7/27/2018



<https://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/agent-orange> /last access: 7/27/2018

<https://www.nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/npr/81ali.pdf> /last access: 7/27/2018

https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XXVI-3&chapter=26&lang=en /last access 8/27/2018

<https://www.opcw.org/news/article/the-sarin-gas-attack-in-japan-and-the-related-forensic-investigation/>

<https://undocs.org/S/2016/738>

http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session27/Documents/A_HRC_27_60_ENG.doc

<https://www.opcw.org/about-opcw/mission/>