



BITSMUN '23

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**BACKGROUND
GUIDE**



BITSMUN '23



UNGA DISEC

**United
Nations General Assembly
Disarmament
and
International Security
Committee**

Agenda

Deliberating the ethics, legalities and risks associated with the weaponization of Artificial Intelligence

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

*Debate and deliberation is how you stir the soul of a democracy”
-Jesse Jackson*

Greetings delegates,

It gives us immense pleasure to welcome you all as delegates at BITS MUN HYD . I hope you're as excited as we are about being a part of this conference. To the MUN veterans out there, we promise you a very enriching debate and to the newcomers, we promise you a memorable first experience! A MUN inculcates in you, oratory skills, cajoling negotiations, in-depth research and if we start making a list of the qualities, the entire background guide might talk just about it! With this said, a committee simulation is meaningful and successful only when the delegates are well prepared.

To aid in your research preparation, we have spent hours researching and writing this Background Guide. The Background Guide serves as an introduction to your respective committee and an overview of the topics that you will be debating over the course of the conference. Also, it is to be considered that this guide is only a basic outline to direct you with regards to the agenda; you are advised not to rely on this totally. What we desire from the delegates is not experience, or how articulate they are. Rather, we want to see how she/he can respect differences of opinion and work around these, while extending their own stance so that it encompasses more of the others without compromising their own stand, thereby reaching acceptable, and practical solutions.

We would require you all to be thorough with the research and implement it in a wise way in the committee. Also, the Executive Board only thinks the matter at hand is somewhat objected to this way, this is entirely subjected to different perceptions of different people. Any contradictions if at all occur, this guide is not to be taken as a binding or ruling document. We would insist that you follow this research pattern:

- Read about your state (country)
- Read the relation of your country with the agenda centric countries
- Read about those countries, the trade, cultural, historic and diplomatic relations between your country and them
- Read about the agenda,

- Read about the previous UN actions, resolutions and conventions,

Unless absolutely necessary, the Executive Board will not intervene in the flow of debate. As a result, it is up to the delegates to keep the committee moving forward. We are certain that the delegates will be able to guide the committee in the correct path with proper investigation. If you have any questions concerning the agenda or the rules of procedure, please contact the Executive Board at any time before or during the conference. In addition, we have provided one addendum to this letter that discusses the kind of evidence involved in this simulation.

We truly hope that all participants maintain the highest standards of decorum and conduct themselves appropriately during the conference days. Remember, you ought to behave like a diplomat representing your country to the best of your abilities, and we really hope that this UNGA-DISEC simulation will help you acquire experience to become better professionals in the future. We are always available to answer any questions you may have. You may either ask us questions or provide replies. That way, we'd like you a lot more!

We ask that delegates not think of this meeting as a zero-sum game. Model UN conferences are collaborative rather than competitive, and we hope to maintain this atmosphere throughout our committee. Our objective is not to fix the world's issues in three days, but rather to educate ourselves about them, ensuring that we become a generation of informed leaders with the skills and drive to make our world a better place.

Warm regards,

Chairperson: Benedict Thomas

Vice Chairperson: Anirudh H

USAGE OF THE BACKGROUND GUIDE

Study Guides are, contradictory to popular belief, and not supposed to contain all the information on a certain topic. All the information given in this guide is from an unbiased perspective and we have refrained from making judgments as much as possible if none has been made by the United Nations.

BASIC SUGGESTIONS BEFORE YOU START RESEARCHING

A few aspects that delegates should keep in mind while preparing:

Procedure: The purpose of putting in procedural rules in any committee is to ensure a more organised and efficient debate. The committee will follow the UNA-USA Rules of Procedure, a link for which has been provided in the last section of this Guide. Although the Executive Board shall be fairly strict with the Rules of Procedure, the discussion of agenda will be the main priority. So, delegates are advised not to restrict their statements due to hesitation regarding procedure.

Foreign Policy: Following the foreign policy of one's country is the most important aspect of a Model UN Conference. This is what essentially differentiates a Model UN from other debating formats. To violate one's foreign policy without adequate reason is one of the worst mistakes a delegate can make.

Role of the Executive Board: The Executive Board is appointed to facilitate debate. The committee shall decide the direction and flow of debate. The delegates are the ones who constitute the committee and hence must be uninhibited while presenting their opinions/stance on any issue. However, the Executive Board may put forward questions and/or ask for clarifications at all points of time to further debate and test participants. A challenging, yet highly rewarding committee, involvement in this simulation offers an insight into the dynamics of international relations and politics. Lots of work will be required but as previous participants in similar simulations ourselves, we promise you an exciting experience

NATURE AND PROOF OF EVIDENCE

1. News Sources:

a. **REUTERS** – Any Reuters article which clearly makes mention of the fact or is in contradiction of the fact being stated by a delegate in council. (<http://www.reuters.com/>)

b. **State-operated News Agencies** – These reports can be used in support of or against the State that owns the News Agency. These reports, if credible or substantial enough, can be used in support of or against any Country as such but in that situation, they can be denied by any other country in the council. Some examples are:

- i. RIA Novosti (Russia) <http://en.rian.ru/>
- ii. IRNA (Iran) <http://www.irna.ir/ENIndex.htm>
- iii. BBC (United Kingdom) <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

2. **Government Reports:** These reports can be used in a similar way as the State Operated News Agencies reports and can, in all circumstances, be denied by another country. However, a nuance is that a report that is being denied by a certain country can still be accepted by the Executive Board as credible information. Examples are,

- i. **Government Websites** like the State Department of the United States of America <http://www.state.gov/index.htm> or the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation <http://www.eng.mil.ru/en/index.htm>
- ii. **Ministry of Foreign Affairs** of various nations like India (<http://www.mea.gov.in/>), People's Republic of China (<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/>), France (<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/>), Russian Federation (http://www.mid.ru/brp_4.nsf/main_eng).
- iii. **Permanent Representatives** to the United Nations: Reports <http://www.un.org/en/members/> (Click on any country to get the website of the Office of its Permanent Representative).

iv. **Multilateral Organizations** like the NATO (<http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/index.htm>), ASEAN (<http://www.aseansec.org/>), OPEC (http://www.opec.org/opec_web/en/), etc.

v. **Please note that the Xinhua**(Government news agency from China will not be accepted as a credible source)

3. UN Reports: All UN Reports are considered credible information or evidence for the Executive Board of the Security Council.

i. **UN Bodies:** Like the UNSC(<http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/>), GA(<http://www.un.org/en/ga/>), HRC(<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/HRCIndex.aspx>) etc.

ii. **UN Affiliated bodies** like the International Atomic Energy Agency (<http://www.iaea.org/>), World Bank (<http://www.worldbank.org/>), International Monetary Fund (<http://www.imf.org/external/index.htm>), International Committee of the Red Cross (<http://www.icrc.org/eng/index.jsp>), etc.

iii. **Treaty Based Bodies** like the Antarctic Treaty System (<http://www.ats.aq/e/ats.htm>), the International Criminal Court (<http://www.icccpi.int/Menus/ICC>)

Under no circumstances will sources like Wikipedia (<http://www.wikipedia.org/>), Amnesty International (<http://www.amnesty.org/>), Human Rights Watch (<http://www.hrw.org/>) or newspapers like the Guardian (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/>), Times of India (<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/>), etc. be accepted.

Introduction to DISEC

The Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC) is a committee of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) that is responsible for promoting disarmament and international security. It was established in 1948 as the First Committee of the UNGA and is one of the six main committees of the UNGA, along with the Second Committee (Economic and Financial), Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural), Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization), Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary), and Sixth Committee (Legal).

DISEC is composed of all 193 member states of the UN and is chaired by a president who is elected by the UNGA. The committee meets annually during the general debate of the UNGA and is responsible for addressing a wide range of issues related to disarmament and international security. These issues include:

1. The proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons
2. The prevention of an arms race in outer space
3. The promotion of disarmament education
4. The regulation of arms transfers
5. The role of disarmament in the maintenance of international peace and security.

DISEC plays a key role in the development and implementation of disarmament and non-proliferation policies at the international level. It works closely with other UN bodies and agencies that are involved in disarmament and international security, such as the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). One of the main functions of DISEC is to consider and adopt resolutions on disarmament and international security issues. These resolutions are not legally binding, but they reflect the consensus of the international community on a particular issue and can influence the policies and actions of member states. Some of the most significant resolutions adopted by DISEC include the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). In addition to its formal work, DISEC also plays a key role in fostering dialogue and cooperation among member states on disarmament and international security issues. As with all UNGA committees, DISEC operates through a process of negotiation and consensus-building. Member states are encouraged to participate actively in the committee's work and to contribute to the development of resolutions and other documents.

Overall, the Disarmament and International Security Committee is a vital forum for the promotion of disarmament and international security at the global level. Its work helps to create a more peaceful and secure world for all.

Deliberating the ethics, legalities and risks associated with the weaponization of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) technology has instigated significant development across diverse sectors, delivering unparalleled resolutions to a spectrum of critical issues plaguing the world. The expansive applicability of AI is apparent amongst numerous domains, encompassing healthcare, transportation, education, entertainment, and, significantly pertinent to the committee's discourse, the realm of defence and security.

Weaponisation of AI: Promises and Risks

Technological advancement has been an intrinsic part of the evolution of warfare and defence. Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a disruptive force with the immense potential to change the art of combat in a time of such fast technological growth. AI technology holds within itself the capacity to develop autonomous systems, such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and ground vehicles, which demonstrate the ability to carry out surveillance, reconnaissance, and even combat duties, with minimal support from humans. Their remarkable efficiency, ceaseless operational capability, and unwavering diligence confer a substantial enhancement to a military's operational prowess. Naturally, such deployment mitigates the risk to human lives by delegating certain tasks to AI-driven autonomous systems. Moreover, the contemporary era is marked by an exponential proliferation of data in the theatre of warfare, necessitating the employment of advanced data processing and analytical techniques. AI algorithms demonstrate an exceptional proficiency in expeditiously scrutinising extensive datasets, discerning intricate patterns, and imparting crucial insights. This analytical acumen, coupled with AI's capability to interpret historical data and formulate predictive models, significantly bolsters the acumen of military strategists. It aids in the anticipation of adversary actions, the evaluation of strategy efficacy, and the assessment of potential outcomes.

While the deployment of AI technology offers unprecedented prospects for military establishments, it also brings forth a unique array of challenges, as customary with any technological integration in the realm of defence. Although the primary concern emanating from the introduction of AI in the domain of warfare remains the ethical and moral dilemmas stemming from the same, additional issues encompass technical vulnerabilities and the prospective proliferation of lethal AI technology. AI systems are susceptible to technical vulnerabilities, originating from software anomalies, hardware malfunctions, or orchestrated cyberattacks, and have potential to lead to catastrophic consequences. Furthermore, the rapid

progress of AI technology has incited an international competition, referred to as the "AI arms race," with nations racing to develop effective and lethal AI-driven weaponry. The ensuing proliferation of these technologies, coupled with the absence of comprehensive international regulations, engenders a precarious environment marked by the risk of a hazardous and unregulated escalation in military AI capabilities.

Ethical Dilemmas: Judgement and Accountability

The central concern associated with the deployment of AI and ML technologies in the context of warfare primarily revolves around the ethical and moral dilemmas arising from their utilisation. It is important to emphasise that AI itself does not constitute a weapon; rather, it functions as a cognitive tool that facilitates the application of weaponry to specified targets. AI serves this purpose both by using robotic intermediaries and by aiding human operators in the application of weaponry. It is pertinent to note that AI, as a tool, possesses the capability to operate autonomously, making independent decisions and learning from past actions. Consequently, when humans collaborate with AI, it can be challenging to definitively determine ultimate responsibility for decisions and actions undertaken on the battlefield. The establishment of clear lines of accountability in such scenarios is of utmost significance. The concerns are also particularly concentrated on the concept of Lethal Autonomous Weapons (LAWs), weapon systems incorporating autonomy in its critical functions, specifically in target selection and engagement and have been the subject of extensive deliberation within global forums.

Autonomous weapons inevitably find it difficult to discriminate between combatants and noncombatants and to take life only when necessary. An inability to discriminate would violate the just war theory as well as the law of war. This is consequently followed by concerns that autonomous weapons are prone to errors and may be unable to operate predictably. Moreover, even if LAWs meet basic law of war requirements, the programming of autonomous systems shall not be able to distinguish between what is legal and what is right, as such judgement calls are inherently human and are difficult to emulate otherwise. For example, a human soldier might have empathy and use judgement to decide not to kill a lawful combatant putting down a weapon or who looks like they are about to give up, while a robotic soldier would follow its order, killing the combatant.

LAWs lack meaningful human control, and create a moral accountability gap. When they malfunction or commit war crimes, there is no single person to hold accountable the way a drone operator, pilot in the cockpit, or ground team would be accountable in similar circumstances. Military robotics also appear to create excessive moral distance from war, with such technologies making war too "easy" for political leaders. The core fear is that AI and ML

technologies will allow leaders and soldiers not to feel ethically responsible for using military force because they do not understand how the machine makes decisions and they are not accountable for what the machine does. While Autonomous Systems may substitute for a human soldier, they cannot be held accountable the way a human soldier is held accountable. If a robot soldier deployed in a counter-insurgency mission to clear a building that is suspected to house insurgents, commits a war crime, indiscriminately executing noncombatants, who is responsible? The responsible party could be the programmer, but what if the programmer never imagined that particular situation?

The responsible party could be the commander who ordered the activation of the weapon, but what if the weapon behaved in a way that the commander could not have reasonably predicted?

Legalities: Shades of grey

The First Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions (AP I) outlines that states have an obligation to assess whether a new weapon, means, or method of warfare could be prohibited by International Humanitarian Law (IHL) or any other relevant international law rules in various stages of its development, including research, acquisition, or adoption. Article 36 of the Protocol creates a connection between Article 35, which defines "Basic rules" in warfare, and the introduction of a new weapon by states. In essence, this principle requires High Contracting Parties to evaluate the potential legality or unlawfulness of a new weapon concerning the provisions of the Protocol and other international laws, based on its expected use at the time of assessment. If such evaluations are not undertaken, the state would bear responsibility for any wrongful harm caused by the weapon. Although states are not expected to foresee all potential misuses of the weapon, they are obliged to establish internal procedures to clarify its legality.

As a response to a report by the UN Special Rapporteur, the Meeting of High Contracting Parties (HCP) under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) decided to convene an Informal Meeting of Experts in 2014 to discuss issues related to emerging technologies in lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS). Consequently, the CCW has become the principal platform for global discussions regarding autonomous weapons. Key questions related to the definition of LAWS, varying degrees of autonomy, and the nature of interactions between humans and autonomous weapon systems remain unresolved.

Over the past nine years, the United Nations has seen an expansion of discussions on this matter. However, civil society and many state parties participating in the CCW have expressed

frustration due to the lack of tangible outcomes. If the CCW continues to only engage in inconclusive deliberations, there will likely be increased demands to shift this process to another forum. In such a scenario, the CCW would once again serve as a platform for preliminary discussions on arms control, with the final decisions being reached in alternative forums.

Recommended Further Reading:

Further Reading

1. **Applying AI on the Battlefield: The Ethical Debates | SpringerLink**
https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-54173-6_12#Sec5
- 2.
3. **The Ethics & Morality of Robotic Warfare: Assessing the Debate over Autonomous Weapons | American Academy of Arts and Sciences**
- 4.
5. <https://www.amacad.org/publication/ethics-morality-robotic-warfare-assessing-debate-over-autonomous-weapons>
6. **Ethics of autonomous weapons | Stanford News -**
<https://news.stanford.edu/2019/05/01/ethics-autonomous-weapons/>
7. **Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) – UNODA -**
<https://disarmament.unoda.org/the-convention-on-certain-conventional-weapons/background-on-laws-in-the-ccw/>
8. **Autonomy in Weapons Systems and the Struggle for Regulation - Centre for International Governance Innovation -**
<https://www.cigionline.org/articles/autonomy-in-weapons-systems-and-the-struggle-for-regulation/>
- 9.
10. **AI and the Actual IHL Accountability Gap - Centre for International Governance Innovation -**
<https://www.cigionline.org/articles/ai-and-the-actual-ihl-accountability-gap/>

11. IHL Treaties - Additional Protocol (I) to the Geneva Conventions, 1977 - Commentary of 1987 Article | Article 36 - New weapons - <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/api-1977/article-36/commentary/1987?activeTab=undefined>