



# Security Council

Directed By: Monica Garcia Vega

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## TSMUN XXII BACKGROUND GUIDE 2018

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**Topic I: The Situation in Yemen**

**Topic II: Addressing the Use of Chemical Weapons in Recent Conflicts**



Dear Delegates,

Welcome to Tallahassee Southern Regional Model United Nations! My name is Monica Garcia Vega, and I am the Director of the Security Council for TSMUN 2018. I am currently a student at Tallahassee Community College and plan to transfer to Florida State University to study Political Science and International Relations. This is my second year participating in Model United Nations, and I currently serve as the President for Tallahassee Community College's Model United Nations team.

The topics under discussion for this year's Security Council are:

- I. The Situation in Yemen
- II. Addressing the Use of Chemical Weapons in Recent Conflicts

The United Nations Security Council is one of the six main organizations of the UN. The Security Council is tasked with sustaining international peace and security. It is the only UN body with authority to adopt binding resolutions as well as impose economic sanctions and military power. The Council is made up of fifteen member states, which includes five permanent members of the Council with veto powers. The membership, functions, powers, and governance of the Security Council make it a unique body of the UN.

I hope you find this background guide useful in your preparation for the conference. This background guide is meant to introduce delegates to the topics that will be discussed in committee and provide guidance as delegates begin their research. Delegates are strongly encouraged to research the positions, views, and opinions of their countries as well as relevant regional and international framework, past resolutions, and organizations and initiatives.

Each delegation will submit a position paper in preparation for the committee. Delegates must turn in their papers before the start of the first committee session. Papers may be emailed to [sc@tsmun.org](mailto:sc@tsmun.org) and can also be submitted through a USB drive or hard copy. For a position paper guide and an example position paper, please visit <http://www.tsmun.org/position-papers.html>. Papers that are not in the correct format will not be eligible for awards. For conference information, resources for preparation, scholarships, and other useful information visit <http://www.tsmun.org/>. If you have any questions leading up to the conference, feel free to contact me at [sc@tsmun.org](mailto:sc@tsmun.org). I look forward to seeing the culmination of your hard work and preparation in committee.

Sincerely,

Monica Garcia Vega, Security Council Director  
[sc@tsmun.org](mailto:sc@tsmun.org)



## Committee Overview

### ***Introduction***

With the ratification of the UN Charter in 1945, the Security Council was established as one of the six main organs of the UN.<sup>1</sup> The Security Council, under the Charter, is given the primary responsibility of fulfilling one of the main purposes of the UN: maintaining international peace and security.<sup>2</sup> The first session of the Security Council was held on January 17, 1946, at Church House, Westminster, London.<sup>3</sup> The permanent residence of the Security Council is at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City.<sup>4</sup> The Security Council meets year-round, and when necessary, emergency meetings can be called.<sup>5</sup>

### ***Committee Mandate***

Under the UN Charter, the four main purposes of the UN are to maintain international peace and security, develop friendly relationships among states, attain international cooperation in solving international problems and promote human rights and be a center for coordinating the actions of nations towards the achievement of these purposes.<sup>6</sup> The Security Council is mandated as the primary organ of the UN for maintaining international peace and security.<sup>7</sup> The Security Council determines the existence of a threat to peace or an act of aggression.<sup>8</sup> The 15-member Council calls upon the parties of a dispute to settle it by peaceful means with recommendations for settlement terms and adjustment methods.<sup>9</sup> If necessary, the Security Council may impose sanctions or authorize military action in order to maintain or restore international peace and security.<sup>10</sup> All Member States are obligated to comply with Security Council decisions under the UN Charter, and it is the only UN body with this authority.<sup>11</sup> The Security Council also recommends the new Secretary-General and the admission of new states to the General Assembly.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Security Council About." *United Nations*.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> "Chapter I." *United Nations*.

<sup>7</sup> "Security Council About." *United Nations*.

<sup>8</sup> "The Security Council." *United Nations*.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> "Functions and Powers." *United Nations*.



## ***Governance, Structure, and Membership***

The Council consists of fifteen members with five permanent members and ten non-permanent members.<sup>13</sup> Each member has one vote, and only the permanent five members of the Security Council have the right to veto resolutions or decisions.<sup>14</sup> The permanent members of the Security Council are France, the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and China.<sup>15</sup>

The ten non-permanent members of the Security Council are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms.<sup>16</sup> Any member of the UN may attend Security Council sessions if invited by the Council.<sup>17</sup> Invited members cannot vote but may submit proposals and draft resolutions.<sup>18</sup> For these proposals and draft resolutions to be voted upon, there must be a request from a member of the Security Council.<sup>19</sup> The presidency of the Security Council is held for a period of one month by each member and alternates in accordance with alphabetical order.<sup>20</sup> Council meetings may be called at any time by the President. The agenda for each Security Council meeting must be approved by the President.<sup>21</sup>

## ***Conclusion***

The Security Council's structure, governance, functions, and powers make it a unique body of the UN. Maintaining the peace and security of the international community is the main objective of the 15-member Council. Economic sanctions and military actions may be used by the Council in order to realize its mandate. The Council's responses to political and humanitarian crises and violations to international law are significant in that they guide the international community's reaction to these situations. As the only UN body with authority to pass binding resolutions, the Security Council is paramount to the fulfillment of one of the UN's main purposes.

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<sup>13</sup> "Chapter V." *United Nations*.

<sup>14</sup>"Voting System and Records." *United Nations*.

<sup>15</sup> "Chapter V." *United Nations*.

<sup>16</sup> "Current Members." *United Nations*.

<sup>17</sup> "Provisional Rules of Procedure of the Security Council." *United Nations*. 1983.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.



## The Situation in Yemen

### ***Introduction***

Yemen is one of the oldest civilizations in the world.<sup>22</sup> In modern times, North Yemen became independent from the Ottoman Empire in 1918 and was then ruled by local kings until a coup in 1962 established the Yemen Arab Republic.<sup>23</sup> South Yemen was under British rule from 1832 until a war in 1967.<sup>24</sup> The government of South Yemen then became a socialist state and founded the People's Republic of South Yemen.<sup>25</sup> An exodus of Yemenis from the south to the north followed the formation of the socialist state and led to two decades of hostility between the northern and southern states.<sup>26</sup> In 1990, the two states unified as the Republic of Yemen.<sup>27</sup>

Since its unification, Yemen has seen internal conflict throughout the years with several separatist movements and civil wars, yet the current conflict facing this country has become a political and humanitarian crisis. The situation in Yemen has its beginnings with the Arab Spring as well as the Houthi insurgency in 2011.<sup>28</sup> The country was also facing Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula at the time.<sup>29</sup> Early uprisings and protests denounced the economic conditions of the country and corruption in government.<sup>30</sup> Protesters called for the resignation of the Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh.<sup>31</sup> As protests began to spread to other major cities, violence escalated.<sup>32</sup> In April 2011, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) proposed the GCC Initiative, an agreement in which Saleh would step down in exchange for immunity from prosecution, in an attempt to mediate the crisis in Yemen.<sup>33</sup> Further violence followed Saleh's refusal to sign the agreement. In response, the Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 2014 in October 2011 which called for an end to the violence and acceptance of the GCC Initiative with an orderly transfer of power.<sup>34</sup> The Council condemned the human rights violations by authorities and abuses by other actors in Yemen as well as expressed concern over the presence of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which is considered the most dangerous branch of Al-Qaeda.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Szczepanski, Kallie. "Introduction to Yemen, One of the Oldest Civilizations on Earth." *ThoughtCo.*

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> "The World Factbook: Yemen." *Central Intelligence Agency.*

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> "Agreement on the implementation mechanism for the transition process in Yemen in accordance with the initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)." *United Nations.* 2011.

<sup>34</sup> "Security Council Condemns Human Rights Violations by Yemeni Authorities, Abuses by 'Other Actors,' after Months of Political Strife." *United Nations.*

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.



In November 2011, Saleh signed the GCC Initiative to step down and transfer some of his powers to his deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi.<sup>36</sup> In February 2012, Saleh formally transferred his powers following Hadi's uncontested election victory.<sup>37</sup>

This political transition of power was supposed to bring stability to Yemen. Instead, Hadi was faced with numerous problems, such as continued attacks by Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, the continued loyalty of military officers to former President Saleh, and a secessionist movement in the south.<sup>38</sup> In addition, unemployment, corruption, and food insecurity were becoming increasingly pressing issues.<sup>39</sup> The Houthi movement, which champions Yemen's Zaidi Shia Muslim minority and fought a series of rebellions against Saleh, took advantage of the new president's weakness by taking control of the northern Saada province and neighboring areas.<sup>40</sup> Disappointed with the political transition, many Yemenis supported the Houthis and entered the capital setting up roadblocks and street camps.<sup>41</sup> After reinforcing their takeover of the capital city Sanaa in January 2015, the Houthis and security forces loyal to Saleh attempted to take control of the country.<sup>42</sup> This forced Hadi to flee Yemen and go abroad in March 2015.<sup>43</sup> Saudi Arabia and several other Arab states became alarmed by the rise of a group they believed to be backed militarily by Iran.<sup>44</sup> Looking to prevent regional dominance by Iran, air campaigns with the purpose of restoring Hadi's government began.<sup>45</sup>

### ***Current Situation in Yemen***

Devastating war between forces loyal to the government of President Hadi, which is supported by a military coalition, and those allied to the Houthi rebel movement has caused a humanitarian disaster. An estimated 18.8 million people, around 69 percent of Yemen's population, are in need of humanitarian assistance.<sup>46</sup> No side seems to be close to a decisive military victory after two years of fighting. Despite the continued intense air campaign and naval blockade, pro-government forces have been unable to drive out the rebels from their northern strongholds, including Sanaa and its surrounding province.<sup>47</sup> Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant amidst the political crisis have expanded their operations and influence in Yemen.<sup>48</sup> The current conflict and blockade have caused a humanitarian disaster.

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<sup>36</sup> "The World Factbook: Yemen." *Central Intelligence Agency*.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> "Yemen in Crisis." *Council on Foreign Relations*.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> "Yemen: The forgotten war." *Amnesty International*.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> "Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)." *Council on Foreign Relations*.



Since March 2015, more than 7,600 people have been killed, more than 42,000 injured, and around 3.3 million people have been displaced.<sup>49</sup> As of January 2017, more than 2 million people remained displaced, one million people had returned to their homes, and 180,000 people have fled the country.<sup>50</sup> An estimated 17 million people are considered food insecure and 6.8 million severely food insecure.<sup>51</sup> The World Food Program has classified seven of Yemen's 22 provinces as being at "emergency" level.<sup>52</sup>

The war has increased poverty and damaged infrastructure leaving only a few medical facilities still functioning and two-thirds of the population without access to safe drinking water.<sup>53</sup> Since a severe outbreak began in April 2017, cholera has spread to 21 of the country's 22 provinces, infecting more 200,000 people and killing more than 1,300.<sup>54</sup> It is the worst outbreak of cholera in the world.<sup>55</sup> Yemen's crisis appears to be worsening by the day.

### ***Actions Taken by the UN***

The Secretary-General established a Special Political Mission (SPM) for Yemen in 2011 to support the implementation of the GCC Initiative.<sup>56</sup> The SPM, now headed by the Special Envoy, is working closely with the Yemeni government, other Yemeni stakeholders, and the Member States in the region.<sup>57</sup> Mediation and efforts towards a political agreement to end the conflict in the country are led by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, which is currently Ismail Ouls Cheikh Aahmed.<sup>58</sup>

In August 2016, a report by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights laid out several serious allegations of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law committed by all sides which included: attacks on residential areas and civilian infrastructure, detentions, the use of landmines and cluster bombs, and forced evictions and displacement. Allegations of sniper and drone attacks against civilians, targeted killings, and the recruitment and use of children in hostilities were also included in the report. UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein called on the international community to establish an international and independent body to carry out comprehensive investigations in Yemen.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> "Crisis Overview." *United Nations Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> "Yemen Emergency." *World Food Programme*.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> "World Community Must Solve Yemen Water Crisis to Halt Spiraling Cholera Outbreak." *United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner*. 16 June 2017.

<sup>54</sup> "Yemen Hit by World's Worst Cholera Outbreak as Cases Reach 200,000." *United Nations*. 24 June 2017.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> "The Special Envoy to the Secretary-General on Yemen (SESG)." *United Nations*.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> "Zeid Urges Accountability for Violations in Yemen." *United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner*. 25 August 2016.



The United Nations Security Council has adopted several resolutions in hopes of resolving the conflict in Yemen. Resolution 2216, adopted shortly after the coalition intervention on April 14, 2015, is still the key Council decision on Yemen since the beginning of the full-scale war in the country.<sup>60</sup> The resolution established a targeted arms embargo against the Houthi and forces loyal to former president Saleh.<sup>61</sup> Of the several demands placed on the rebel group through Resolution 2216, withdrawing from all seized areas and relinquishing all arms seized from military institutions, including missile systems, were the most significant.<sup>62</sup> In 2015, two rounds of UN-sponsored peace talks were convened in Switzerland.<sup>63</sup> Further negotiations followed a temporary cessation of hostilities in April 2016.<sup>64</sup> In August 2016, after more than three months, peace talks between the parties involved, brokered by UN's special envoy on Yemen, were suspended.<sup>65</sup>

As of March 2017, the United Nations' appeal for \$2.1 billion to be able to assist 12 million people in Yemen was only 7 percent funded.<sup>66</sup> The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has been coordinating with multiple United Nations organizations, including the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), to help alleviate the crisis.<sup>67</sup> On June 15, 2017, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement on Yemen with an emphasis on the nation's humanitarian crisis and trust-building measures regarding Hodeidah port, a strategic Red Sea port that has been the entry for over 80 percent of the country's food imports.<sup>68</sup> It was the Security Council's first product regarding the war in Yemen in 14 months.<sup>69</sup>

### ***Regional and International Frameworks***

As of November 2015, around 166,658 refugees from Yemen were reported in countries in the Gulf region and the Horn of Africa.<sup>70</sup> Out of the 166,658 people, 75,748 arrived in Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Sudan fleeing the crisis in Yemen.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> "In Hindsight: Council Action and Inaction on Yemen." *Security Council Report*. 20 June 2017.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> "Yemen Peace Talks Kick Off today in Switzerland." *Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen*. 15 December 2015.

<sup>64</sup> "United Nations Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen Declares Cessation of Hostilities and a New Round of Talks for Yemen." *Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen*. 23 March 2016.

<sup>65</sup> "Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Ishmail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, Briefing to the Security Council." *Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen*. 31 August 2016.

<sup>66</sup> "Amid Humanitarian Funding Gap, 20 Million People across Africa, Yemen at Risk of Starvation, Emergency Relief Chief Warns Security Council." *United Nations*. 10 March 2017.

<sup>67</sup> "Crisis Overview." *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*.

<sup>68</sup> "In Hindsight: Council Action and Inaction on Yemen." *Security Council Report*. 20 June 2017.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> "Yemen Situation Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan." *International Organization for Migration*. December 2015.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.



To continue to address the needs of the people fleeing Yemen in receiving countries, the country plans of Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Sudan were compiled in a Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RRMRP) for the year of 2016.<sup>72</sup> This plan was co-led by UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and involved organizations such as the UN Children's Fund, UN Population Fund, World Food Program, and the World Health Organization.<sup>73</sup> The RRMRP outlines methods and objectives in order to provide assistance and protection to those fleeing Yemen into Djibouti, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Sudan for 2016.<sup>74</sup>

The regional objectives regarding the Yemen Situation are refugees, migrants, and returnees fleeing having access to safe, humane movements, and access to territory and asylum; affected populations having access to protection and assistance upon arrival, with access to freedom of movement and basic services; refugees, migrants, and returnees having access to long-term solutions such as regularization of stay, local integration, and voluntary return and reintegration; and strengthening partnerships at regional and national levels to deal with the intricacy of mixed migratory flows and promoting dialogue and cooperation as well as supporting existing coordination mechanisms with regional initiatives.<sup>75</sup> Key challenges in the regional response included the already diversified and complex outflow of refugees, lack of orderly movements and the risky journeys refugees embark, outreach to beneficiaries, and onward movement.<sup>76</sup> However, achievements resulting from this framework were providing refugees with access to safe, orderly, and humane movements, protection and assistance for refugees upon arrival, and the strengthening of partnerships, regional coordination, and promotion of dialogue and cooperation.<sup>77</sup>

The ongoing crisis in Yemen has posed several development challenges for the agricultural and food sector.<sup>78</sup> According to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), 2012-2015 and the government of Yemen, development challenges include high population growth and wide dispersion of the population; food insecurity; climate change; inadequate infrastructure; and limited funding to finance development.<sup>79</sup> As outlined in the *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations FAO Country Programming Framework Republic of Yemen 2013-2017*, to increase food security and ease poverty, the development of the agriculture and food sector in Yemen is directed by the National Food Security Strategy (NFSS) 2011; the Transitional Program for Stabilization and Development (TPSD) 2012-2014; the National Agriculture Sector Strategy (NASS) 2012-2016; and the National Fisheries Strategy (NFS) 2012-2025.<sup>80</sup> The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is mandated as the lead UN Agency in regards to agriculture, food, and nutrition security.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> "FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF) Republic of Yemen." *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations*.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.



With the support of FAO, the CPF Strategic long-term outcome for Yemen is inhibiting food and nutrition insecurity with the establishment of a development policy and strengthening of regulatory framework to provide improved management, conservation, and use of natural resources in order to increase the production and productivity of agriculture and fisheries as well as reduce rural unemployment and poverty.<sup>82</sup>

### ***Conclusion***

The people in Yemen are currently suffering from a political and humanitarian crisis. If the situation in Yemen continues to escalate, the impact on international peace and security will be detrimental. The Security Council must ease the suffering of the Yemenis and bring an end to this conflict that has triggered a migration crisis, worsened food insecurity, and caused a health emergency. It is essential that members of the Security Council collaborate with each other in order to alleviate and resolve the situation in Yemen. How can those in need of assistance receive immediate aid? What can be done to ease the humanitarian crisis and prevent conflict escalation? What were the shortcomings of past actions to the conflict in Yemen? What can be done to ensure the next round of peace talks mark progress towards peace?

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid.



## Addressing the Use of Chemical Weapons in Recent Conflicts

### Introduction

The use of modern chemical weapons in war began in World War I when both sides of the war would employ poisonous gas, such as chlorine and phosgene gases, to cause suffering and significant casualties.<sup>83</sup> By the end of World War I, 124,000 tons of chemical agents had been used and nearly 100,000 casualties resulted from the use of chemical weapons.<sup>8485</sup> Chemical weapons were deployed on a large scale in almost all theaters in World War I and II.<sup>86</sup> In its aftermath, old and abandoned chemical weapons were left behind, and even today they still present a problem for many countries.<sup>87</sup> The United States and the Soviet Union both maintained vast stockpiles of chemical weapons during the Cold War, amounting to tens of thousands of tons, enough to destroy much of life on earth.<sup>88</sup>

*The Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases, and the Bacteriological Methods of Warfare*, also referred to as the Geneva Protocol, prohibits the use of chemical and biological weapons in warfare.<sup>89</sup> The Protocol was written and signed at a conference in Geneva held under the auspices of the League of Nations from May 4 to June 17, 1925, and it entered into force on February 8, 1928.<sup>90</sup> *The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction*, or the Chemical Weapons Convention, came into effect on April 29, 1997.<sup>91</sup> The Chemical Weapons Convention allows for rigorous verification of compliance by state parties.<sup>92</sup>

### Current Situation

Even though the use of chemical weapons in warfare is prohibited by international law, there are still instances in conflict where they are used. The use of chemical weapons in Syria has been confirmed by the UN. The Syrian Civil War has been ongoing since 2011 when Syrian citizens took to the streets in uprisings demanding democracy and an end to corruption.<sup>93</sup> Citizens' opposition to the government of President Bashar al-Assad quickly turned into a civil war.<sup>94</sup>

Since 2012, several chemical attacks have been reported to have taken place in Syria. There are multiple reports by the UN's Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab

<sup>83</sup> "Brief History of Chemical Weapons Use." *Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons*.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> "Chemical Weapons." *United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs*.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> "1925 Geneva Protocol." *United Nations Office for Disarmament*.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> "Chemical Weapons." *United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs*.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> "Syria." *Amnesty International*.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.



Republic of the Assad regime using chemical weapons against civilians.<sup>95</sup> In March 2013, the Syrian government and opposition blamed each other for a gas attack that killed 26 people in the town of Khan al-Assal in northern Syria.<sup>96</sup> A UN investigation later found that sarin nerve gas was used, but the guilty party was not identified.<sup>97</sup> On August 21, 2013, hundreds of people suffocated to death in rebel-held suburbs of Amman.<sup>98</sup> Many people were found convulsing, displaying pinpoint pupils, and foaming at the mouth.<sup>99</sup> UN investigators determined that ground-to-ground missiles loaded with sarin gas were fired on civilian areas while residents slept.<sup>100</sup> On April 4, 2017, hundreds suffered symptoms consistent with a reaction to a nerve agent, and more than 80 people were killed in what was an attack by the Syrian government.<sup>101</sup> This recent chemical attack was reported as the worst chemical attack in years in Syria.

According to Amnesty International, there are multiple reports and evidence of chemical weapons being used by Sudanese government forces against civilians in regions of Darfur.<sup>102</sup> Further investigation indicates that at least 30 chemical attacks have taken place in the Jebel Marra area of Darfur since January 2016.<sup>103</sup> It is estimated that there have been between 200 and 250 casualties as a result of exposure to the chemical agents, with most of them being children.<sup>104</sup> Independent chemical weapons experts have concluded that the evidence strongly suggested exposure to blister agents, such as the agents sulfur mustard, lewisite, or nitrogen mustard.<sup>105</sup>

A challenge for preventing the use of chemical weapons is the dual-use of chemical agents.<sup>106</sup> Around the world, chemical agents are widely used peacefully for industrial, commercial, and research purposes.<sup>107</sup> However, chemical agents can be easily exploited by governments and non-state actors because expertise isn't necessary to develop chemical weapons.<sup>108</sup> In Yemen, attacks on civilians with chemical weapons have been reported by Yemeni military personnel.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> "Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic." *United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner*.

<sup>96</sup> "Timeline of Syrian Chemical Weapons Activity, 2012-2017." *Arms Control Association*.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> "Chemical-Weapons Attack in Syria Was Largest Such Event Since 2013, Disarmament Affairs Chief Tells Security Council." *United Nations*. 5 April 2017.

<sup>102</sup> "Sudan: Credible evidence of the use of chemical weapons to kill and maim hundreds of civilians including children in Darfur revealed." *Amnesty International*. 26 September 2016.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> "The Chemical Threat." *Nuclear Threat Initiative*. 30 December 2015.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> "War on Yemen, Inhaling Poisonous Gas: Saudi Arabia Launches Chemical Attack on Sana'a, Killing Civilians." *Global Research*. 22 August 2016.



A number of Yemeni civilians have been killed from inhaling poisonous gases, particularly white phosphorus munition.<sup>110</sup><sup>111</sup> The gas is intended to be used for signaling to other troops and creating smoke screens, but when used against people it can maim and kill by burning to the bone.<sup>112</sup>

### ***Actions Taken by the UN***

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is the “first disarmament agreement negotiated within a multilateral framework that provides for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction under universally applied international control.”<sup>113</sup> In order to prepare for the entry-into-force of the CWC, a Preparatory Commission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) was established on April 29, 1997.<sup>114</sup> The OPCW is in charge of preparing detailed operation procedures and putting into place the necessary infrastructure for the agency.<sup>115</sup> Currently, 189 nations, representing about 98 percent of the global population, have joined the CWC.<sup>116</sup> A relationship agreement between the UN and the OPCW adopted by the General Assembly in 2001 regulates the cooperation between the two organizations.<sup>117</sup>

In September 2013, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2118.<sup>118</sup> This resolution ordered Syria to destroy its chemical weapons stockpile following the use of chemical weapons in a Damascus suburb.<sup>119</sup> The Security Council determined that any use of chemical attacks was a threat to international peace and security.<sup>120</sup> In 2015, the Security Council adopted Resolution 2209 in which it condemned the use of chlorine gas as a weapon in Syria following findings from the OPCW.<sup>121</sup> The Security Council stated that in the event of noncompliance, it would take necessary measures, including economic sanctions and military action, to enforce the resolution.<sup>122</sup> After the chemical attack in Syria on April 4, 2017, that killed more than 80 people, the Security Council held an emergency meeting in which they failed to adopt a resolution condemning the use of chemical weapons in Syria following a veto by the Russian Federation.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> “Iraq/Syria: Danger From US White Phosphorus.” *Human Rights Watch*. 14 June 2017.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> “Chemical Weapons.” *United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs*.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> “Security Council Requires Scheduled Destruction of Syria’s Chemical Weapons, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2118 (2013).” *United Nations*. 27 September 2013.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> “Adopting Resolution 2209 (2015), Security Council Condemns Use of Chlorine Gas as Weapon in Syria.” *United Nations*. 6 March 2015.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> “Security Council Fails to Adopt Resolution Condemning Chemical Weapons Use in Syria, Following Veto by Russian Federation.” *United Nations*. 12 April 2017.



## ***International Framework***

The Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Material of Mass Destruction is a multilateral nonproliferation initiative with the purpose of funding and implementing projects to prevent terrorists and proliferators from acquiring weapons of mass destruction.<sup>124</sup> This partnership was signed June 27, 2002, by Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.<sup>125</sup> This group of countries represents the seven major industrial countries, also known as the G-7.<sup>126</sup> In addition, Russia also signed the partnership making the group the G-8.<sup>127</sup> However, Russia was expelled from the G-8 in March 2014 as a punitive measure for its annexation of Crimea.<sup>128</sup> States that are not G-8 can be included as donor participants.<sup>129</sup> Throughout the Summits of the partnership, leaders meet and produce declarations and plans of action to further the cause of nonproliferation.<sup>130</sup> The partnership has committed to raising over \$20 billion over a period of 10 years for funding nonproliferation projects and assisting nations with the destruction of weapons of mass destruction.<sup>131</sup> However, the progress of the collection of the funding from member states has been very slow, and currently, there is no mechanism for coordination for the initiative.<sup>132</sup>

At the G-7 Summit in March 2016, leaders issued a declaration which, among other things, expressed concern over the findings of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on the use of chemical weapons in Syria. On April 10th and 11th, 2017, the G-7 held a meeting during which the focus was on the chemical attack that occurred on April 4 in Syria.<sup>133</sup> A consensus on a response to the chemical attack was not reached as the G-7 was divided on the application of sanctions against Russia.<sup>134</sup>

## ***Conclusion***

Even though chemical warfare is prohibited by the Geneva Protocol, there are still instances today in which it occurs. The disregard for international law must be dealt with and safeguards should be put in place in order to prevent chemical warfare to be used in the future. The Security Council should condemn all chemical weapons attacks. What are some repercussions and safeguards that could be put in place to discourage the use of chemical weapons in the future? How can current frameworks be amended or improved upon? How can the dual-use of chemical agents be addressed? How can the use of chemical weapons by non-state actors be prevented?

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<sup>124</sup> "Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction ("10 Plus 10 Over 10 Program)." *Nuclear Threat Initiative*.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.



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